

AMERICA'S SWEETHEART

Dear America's Sweetheart Sally,
I'm here for another
week week.

Do you know how wonderful
you were the other night?

THAT WONDERFUL!!!

I'm at the hospital with
my monster mother a lot. But
if you finish reading my very
awkward, dated, miswritten screenplay
call me at 243-6078... I'm
in and crazy out a lot.

I tell Lew you'll never do
"Previous Lens" and he tells me
I don't know ~~shit~~ anything

Anyway, this is to say I like you
hello.

George Furch
(Burn this)

with
Notes from Interview
Sally Field

AMERICA'S SWEETHEART

by
George Furth - *well known playwright*

185-
(BKSU) (C)
Plum

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1 INT. BROADWAY THEATRE IN NEW YORK - EVENING

(TITLES throughout all these opening sequences)

In the dark we HEAR the synchronized, metallic and rhythmic SOUNDS of tap-dancers... a group of them... all girls. Then we SEE their feet, going right down the line... and now we SEE all of them, from the side, while they are all energetically performing a number.

Still dancing, they begin to sing and one girl is standing out (BETTY BIRD) -- nervously dancing or singing behind or ahead. The number the girls are performing is entitled "Perfect," and the point of it is that they are each one of them perfect in every way and everything a man would want in a woman.

Now Betty Bird is deliberately and comically imperfect in the number, to the audience's delight.

After establishing the opening of the number, it is SHOWN in a SERIES OF CUTS with Betty Bird falling apart trying to be "perfect," but being behind, ahead, singing out of place, totally forgetting where they are, looking out at the audience or into the wings, bewildered as the other girls go whizzing past her, and finally giving up and watching the number, unable to keep up with all this "bright perfection."

Now, at the end of this number, the male dancers who have been placed in various groups and positions in the b.g. dressing the stage, all shout and run past all the other girls to Betty Bird, whom they cheer and lift up on their shoulders as she blushes and becomes quite royally modest... they all want the imperfect girl.

The number is charming, Betty is very cute in it, and the audience responds enthusiastically as we

CUT TO:

2 INT. OFFICE IN NEW YORK - DAY

Several men are sitting around a large conference table, all clustered toward the end seats. In a chair close behind the men sits the secretary, LANA, holding casting sheets, photographs, data on the girls being interviewed. Lana is efficient, pretty, plump, and wears tinted sunglasses.

Betty Bird is in the middle of being interviewed, chatting away, but checking their reactions ceaselessly. She is very nervous and she talks quite rapidly (always!).

(CONTINUED)

2 CONTINUED:

BETTY
(remembering the
question they had
just asked)

Uh -- remember way back... how Life Magazine used to have that 'A Day In The Life Of'? Those picture stories? You know? Well, they did. Oh, they'd have a secretary, a model, a school-teacher, see, and one, which I will never forget, was this actress... uh, getting up and drinking black coffee, or sitting on her fire escape crying... and then there was one where she was having this fight with her boyfriend in Central Park, and then sitting at this Walgreen's counter at 42nd and Broadway, very depressed, planning to go home. And they had little captions under these pictures like, 'Sally has coffee at 42nd and Broadway, still upset over her fight with Bill'. Stuff like that. They were all so -- tragic. Terrible. Vicious, actually.

(pause)

Anyway... that's why I came to New York.

Betty abruptly smiles at them as they all sit there stunned.

CUT TO:

3 INT. STUDIO SOUND STAGE - DAY

Betty is seated, talking, and the camera and crew are filming her. She is in California now, and in the middle of a screen test. Being even more nervous, she is very animated and alive.

In the middle of conversation. Talking very fast:

BETTY
What I mean is, I just didn't
ever hear of a screen test where
somebody just sits over there and
asks you questions.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

3

CONTINUED:

BETTY (CONT'D)

Or is it that I get to do a scene later? I mean to show I can act or something. I mean something. This seems to me very stupid.

Laughter from the crew.

BETTY

(continuing)

Oh, I didn't mean that rude or anything.

She gives a very pained expression that makes the crew laugh again.

MAN (O.C.)

(he is also amused by her)

Why don't you not worry about it? This is just to see how you photograph and bring out your personality... it saves you about six hundred interviews. Now... do you like being in Hollywood?

BETTY

(nodding)

Okay. I'm... it's just I'm very nervous.

MAN (O.C.)

That's fine.

BETTY

Nervous is fine? I thought it was the opposite of fine. Whew.

Feigning warm, Betty sticks out her tongue and raises her eyes while lifting her dress to fan herself. Suddenly, she stops:

BETTY

(continuing)

Oh, my God. I don't have a slip on.

Whistles and laughter and some applause.

BETTY

(continuing)

Lis... would ya'... uh... could you see everything?

(CONTINUED)

3 CONTINUED: (2)

CAMERAMAN (O.C.)

Do it again and I'll check it.

Crew laughs. Betty, in pain, forces herself to laugh too.

MAN (O.C.)

Betty?

BETTY

(almost frightened,
jumps... says too
loudly)

What?

Crew laughs.

MAN (O.C.)

It says here you're twenty-five.
Is that right?

BETTY

(after a pause)

Maybe. How old do you want me?

All laugh.

MAN (O.C.)

(laughing)

Never mind. How do you picture
yourself on film?

BETTY

Smoking. I always think women
look so sensational when they
smoke in movies. You know?

She demonstrates smoking various ways, with an imaginary
cigarette.

BETTY

(continuing)

Or if you had a veil. Wait.

She runs off the camera and comes back with a scarf and
demonstrates.

BETTY

(continuing)

I could look over it like this...
like a spy movie. Or wave goodbye
to my husband going off to war.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

3

CONTINUED: (3)

BETTY (CONT'D)

Or pull it across my face very
sexy.

(pause)

Or hang myself.

Crew laughs.

MAN (O.C.)

I don't know what all they told
you, but this series is to be
called 'The Chorus Girls', and
for publicity and all they want
one girl who's the real thing.
Did they tell you that?

BETTY

(smiles and nods
'yes' -- then
quickly reaches
out to stop him)

I didn't hear one word you said.

Laughter OFF CAMERA.

MAN (O.C.)

Why?

BETTY

I wasn't listening.

More laughter.

BETTY

(continuing)

I mean I'm very close to being in
a coma.

They laugh.

BETTY

(continuing)

Last night I had a nose bleed,
I thought I'd need plasma. This
morning I fell so hard getting
off the elevator that I should
be on crutches. Just before this,
I hit my front tooth with a coffee
cup that I thought I would be
unconscious. And if you think
that's funny, what about life
itself?

(CONTINUED)

3 CONTINUED: (4)

They all laugh.

BETTY
(continuing)
Wonderful. God.

Demonstrating what a moron she takes herself for, she puts the thumb of one hand in her mouth and pulls on her earlobe with her other hand while crossing her eyes. All laugh again. Betty just shakes her head.

MAN (O.C.)
(laughing)
That's about it... is there anything
else you want to tell us?

PULL BACK and we are now WATCHING the TEST on film in a screening room with a group of executives.

BETTY
Could I sing? What I'd really
like to do is sing.
(goes right into
various songs)
'Every little breeze seems to
whisper Louise'... 'Sweetest
little fella'. Everybody knows,
don't know why I love him, 'cause
he's might like a'... No, I won't
sing, it's too forward.
(pause)
Is that it?

MAN (O.C.)
That's it.

BETTY
(getting up from
the chair, to Man
O.C.)
I really fucked up, huh?

Everybody screams with laughter and applauds in the screening room and we now SEE a slate, HEAR a VOICE saying "Amity Fuller, screen test, Chorus Girls, take one", and HEAR and SEE the clapboard and another girl is on the screen beginning her test.

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL ROOM (THE BEVERLY HILLS) - DAY

It is a typical Beverly Hills Hotel type room, and from the outside we SEE sunshine, palm trees, and feel the still of Southern California. About the hotel room are a lot of open suitcases that are worn and stuffed with clothes. There is an enormous amount of make-up scattered around the make-up table. Dresses are hung on doors, newspapers, the trades, magazines, two empty trays from room service all clutter the room.

Betty, waiting with the phone cradled under her chin, is going through three purses looking for a cigarette. She finds one broken in the center. She puts it in her mouth, breaking the broken end off, and then discovers the match-book is empty. Suddenly she stops, responding to the VOICE on the phone.

BETTY

Momma?

(starts to cry)

I got it.

CUT TO:

NOTE:

The following sequences, all hurried, continuous, still behind the TITLES, are meant to show a passage of four years. The three girls (as well as the people around them) will change in their looks, their hair, style, clothing, etc. as we MOVE with the series (and the events surrounding a series) for four successful seasons.

This is a very short sequence but should give a sustaining and even mounting sense of excitement, joy, and a sense of growing success for the people being watched.

EXT. STUDIO FRONT GATE - DAY

Many photographers and reporters and Studio publicity people surround the new Chorus Girls, Betty, BRITTA and NANCY, as they pose, shake hands, meet people, and are being introduced.

Britta is extraordinarily beautiful and shy. Nancy is a pretty American girl, open and direct. Betty is adorable and clearly the clown of the group. They seem quite fond of and close to each other in their smiles, remarks and enjoyment.

CUT TO:

6 QUICK SUCCESSION OF TV AND FILM MAGAZINE ARTICLES

Stories and pictures of the three girls or Betty alone. Pictures and articles entitled such things as "Dancing Her Way To Hollywood," "Out Of The Chorus Onto TV," "The Heartbreak Of A New York Chorus Girl And How She Beat It," "The Clown Who Is Not Crying On The Inside." Many covers of periodicals, magazines, newspapers, and we SEE the publicity mounting and mounting as we

CUT TO:

7 INT. SOUND STAGE - QUICK SUCCESSION OF A VARIETY OF SETS - DAY

We SEE the three girls in a number of different scenes being filmed for the TV series. A dressing room scene, a song and dance number, in their apartment, out on dates. Then we go into the working procedures of a series. Rehearsing, takes, looking, watching dailies in the projection room as the girls eat lunch, the editor in gloves working his wheel as he has Betty coming in a door (running this back and forth several times).

CUT TO:

8 QUICK SUCCESSION OF SHOTS OF THE THREE GIRLS

showing the girls at lunch in the commissary under a large photo of the three of them, being made up, putting on wigs, eating breakfast while having their hair dried, rehearsing song and dance numbers, at interviews, publicity photo sessions, in limousines arriving at a variety of glamorous openings of films, and dating, dating an enormous amount of young and attractive men.

CUT TO:

9 INT. SOUND STAGE OF STUDIO - DAY

"Chorus Girls" set. It is a shot in which all three girls are there with three men, smiling, talking. The director yells "And that's a wrap" and the three girls move quickly from the men to each other where they all embrace, cry, and talk all at the same time. A banner goes up saying "We'll miss you" and signed "The Crew", and a table with liquor and food is set up. Everyone is very emotional. Betty crosses over to a man, LEE, and they kiss and he consoles her.

(END OF TITLES)

CUT TO:

INT. UNEMPLOYMENT LINE - HOLLYWOOD - DAY

It is ten years later. A much older Betty Bird enters, her hair set in curlers, wearing only base for make-up, and moves to the front of the line marked "Off-Time Reporting."

It is a very crowded office, people in shorts and halters, barefoot, some men in no shirts, suits, every variety of clothing, several leashed animals... almost everyone wears sunglasses.

BETTY

(to people at the
front of the line
as she moves in front
of them)

Excuse me, please, but I have an
interview. If you don't mind.
Thank you.

There is some grumbling. She turns to the people:

BETTY

(continuing)

Well, can I help it if I have an
interview. Cripes. Deny a person
a job for godsake.

Then, paying no attention to their comments, she takes the rollers out of her hair and brushes it out, gets lipstick on, just as the WOMAN at the window calls out "Next". Betty collects her things and moves to the window, opening her Unemployment Book, and reassembles all the bags and packages and things she is holding while at the window. The Unemployment Woman is black. Neither she nor Betty ever look at each other.

UNEMPLOYMENT WOMAN

(going through a
file for Betty's
records and opening
folders and taking
out sheets of paper
and stamping them and
signing them as she
talks)

You looking for work?

BETTY

(going through her
purse)

Yes.

(CONTINUED)

10 CONTINUED:

UNEMPLOYMENT WOMAN

You turn down any work last week?

BETTY

No.

UNEMPLOYMENT WOMAN

Is there any reason to keep you from accepting employment?

BETTY

No.

UNEMPLOYMENT WOMAN

Okay, sign here.

Betty does. Woman takes book back and writes in it then stamps it and hands her a check.

UNEMPLOYMENT WOMAN

(continuing)

Next week go to line 'D' for your interview.

BETTY

(now looks at the Woman)

For what? I went to line 'D' last week it seems. I'm always going to line 'D' where they make you wait seven years every time. Why do I have to go to line 'D' again. I hate line 'D'.

UNEMPLOYMENT WOMAN

(who still never looks up)

Every four weeks. They have to check if you're really looking for work.

BETTY

(taking the check and getting her things together)

I hardly have any time to look for work because I spend all my time standing in line 'D'.

UNEMPLOYMENT WOMAN

(waving to the next person in line, not looking up)

Next.

CUT TO:

11 INT. LOS ANGELES SUPERIOR COURT - DAY

A long, wide corridor filled with lines of people at a variety of windows dealing with traffic citations.

There are attorneys passing with clients en route to courtrooms, people lined up outside of phone booths, mothers with quarreling children, and again the dress of everyone is unmistakably Southern California.

Betty stands waiting in a line, reading Daily Variety. When it is her turn, she moves up to the window and hands a sizable number of cards to the CITATION WORKER, who looks up at Betty in surprise.

CITATION WORKER

How many tickets is this?

BETTY

(going through her
wallet for money)

Fourteen.

Citation Worker grumbles something and shakes her head and quickly adds the totals of the tickets on an adding machine.

CITATION WORKER

A hundred and forty-six dollars.

As Betty counts out the money, the Worker again mumbles something, but Betty doesn't look up. She hands the Citation Worker the money and waits while the Worker, shaking her head in comment again, stamps the cards paid and hands them back to Betty, grumbling something. Betty continues trying not to notice.

Betty turns to exit down the hallway, putting the cards in her purse and, glancing up suddenly, she sees a very handsome attorney (JOHN HARRIS), in his early forties, standing, listening to a client, staring at Betty. It is clear they know each other and both become visibly upset and surprised. Betty quickly recovers and, pretending to do something with her hair, hurries on her way to the exit.

CUT TO:

12 EXT. BETTY BIRD'S APARTMENT COMPLEX - DAY

John Harris, the attorney, enters through the gate into the courtyard of Betty Bird's apartment building.

(CONTINUED)

12 CONTINUED:

It is astonishingly typical of all pastel-colored, multi-apartment buildings... two duplicated levels of apartments (upper and lower) with a kidney-shaped swimming pool in the center of the courtyard, with some scattered furniture around it.

John consults a piece of paper. He finds the apartment number and walks over to the ground-floor apartment. He rings the bell. A moment. Then, Betty Bird opens the door. She stares at him. There is a moment of silence. Then:

JOHN

Hi.

BETTY

(not smiling)

What do you want, John?

JOHN

Oh...

(a pause)

... How are you?

BETTY

(coldly)

What do you want, John?

JOHN

May I come in?

BETTY

No. No, you may not.

JOHN

(slight pause;
he smiles)It was nice to see you yesterday.
Everything okay?

BETTY

What are you doing here, John?
How did you find me? I don't
want you around here, John.

JOHN

I can't say 'hello'?

BETTY

I want you to go away now,
John. Please.

(CONTINUED)

12 CONTINUED:

JOHN
I've thought about you. I
wondered how you were.

BETTY
Well, I'm terrific. It's been
seven of the best months of my
life. I don't feel crazy anymore.
No more guilts, fights. Just
terrific.

JOHN
Good. I'm glad.
(pause. He looks
around at the building)
Nice.
(no answer from Betty)
Please, may I come in?

BETTY
No.

JOHN
Please.

BETTY
No.

JOHN
Betty, please.

BETTY
(shaking her head
'no' -- then)
Just for a minute.

They enter her apartment.

CUT TO:

13 INT. BETTY'S APARTMENT (BEDROOM) - MORNING

The figure of Betty enters the bedroom which is darkened. Still in her nightgown, she puts down, what we can't now distinguish, a large breakfast tray on the bureau and then crosses to the windows and opens the blackout curtains, letting the light in. She wears a sleeping mask pushed up on her forehead and looks very early morning and haggard..

(CONTINUED)

13 CONTINUED:

She picks up the tray and crosses to the bed where John is waking up. She sits on the foot of the bed and places the large tray between her and John. During this sequence, she is enormously busy (pouring coffee and milk together in cups making cafe au lait, buttering and then sprinkling with cinnamon the already made toast, breaking and vigorously stirring one egg in each glass of orange juice, and laying out napkins and silverware in a place setting for each on the bed) throughout and seldom looks up at John.

BETTY

Could I talk, John, and you just listen? I couldn't sleep at all, not the whole night. I feel like I'm going crazy. I don't know I want you back, John. I don't know that at all. In fact, I know I don't. I mean, it's over three years now and do you know how many times we broke up? A thousand. And now seven months we don't see each other and look who's at the door! John, what is wrong with us that all those times we can't break up? I want my career back, John. More than anything. It's ten years now since my series. I don't blame you, John. But I do. We're not nice anymore, John. I don't mean we're bad. We're just... not nice. Why don't we both just go find somebody terrific and leave each other alone. Okay? I gotta' make it now, John. I gotta'. So, let's just end it right here. Plus, I never liked hangin' around with some guy who's prettier than me. Let's just be quiet and eat.

She puts a piece of toast in her mouth and looks away.

CUT TO:

14 INT. JOHN'S HOUSE AT MALIBU BEACH - DAY

John is showing his new and elaborate beach house to Betty who is impressed and walks almost tentatively as if she might break something. They have been shopping and each holds two large grocery bags. John talks, and whenever he turns directly to Betty, she quickly smiles.

(CONTINUED)

14 CONTINUED:

JOHN

The entranceway. And that's a guest bedroom there. And there's one more back there. Here's the kitchen -- right in there.

They look in from the doorway but continue to hold their bags and move right on with the tour.

JOHN

(continuing)

'S a maid's room off to the side of that. This is the dining room. Living room. And... that's a den. A couple of rooms not decorated back there. And there's a deck out here. Oh. I forgot... my bedroom. Right over here.

(opens door)

There.

It is enormous, very modern, and quite impressive.

BETTY

It's nice.

JOHN

Thank you.

Betty shrugs and smiles. Then she walks back toward the living room, looking hard at everything, and says:

BETTY

Toto... suddenly I get the feeling we're not in Kansas anymore.

She stands alone in the large living room, looking out to the ocean. She looks out. Nods.

BETTY

(continuing)

'Lawyers sure make a lot of bread' she thought to herself. Aloud she turned and said, 'You were right to buy a house, John. Roots.' She wondered who had decorated. Throwing caution to the wind she asked him out loud, 'Who decorated, John?'

JOHN

A friend.

(CONTINUED)

14 CONTINUED: (2)

BETTY

A girl?

JOHN

Yes.

BETTY

That you were involved with?

JOHN

Yes.

BETTY

Ah.

JOHN

Are you upset?

BETTY

(shrugs)

No. Very nice. Betty said nothing
but wondered if the girl was Polish.

John smiles at this and then crosses to the kitchen. Betty follows. They put their bags down and Betty begins putting groceries away. John lifts a sizable weather vane off the counter and into a corner, and begins opening cupboards and shelves for the groceries and folding paper bags as Betty empties them, putting things away. Betty is leaving some items out for immediate cooking.

JOHN

Fond as he was of her, John knew Betty had always been disorganized, and once again would put all the groceries away so he, she, nor anyone else would ever find them again. But, saying nothing, he hummed.

John hums as he folds bags and puts them away.

Betty is casual, smiling innocently, as if not having heard him. Then, with a voice pitched high, speaking almost too sweetly as in a line reading:

BETTY

Oh, John. Why don't you put these things away. That way... you'll know exactly where they are.

(CONTINUED)

14 CONTINUED: (3)

JOHN
(feigning surprise)
Oh. Fine.
(as he begins doing
that:)
What a good idea.

They then have enormous, mocking smiles for each other.

Betty notices the large weather vane on the floor, picks it up and cradles it in her arms.

BETTY
I want to thank all the members of
the Academy who voted for me...

Not appreciative, John gives a deprecating smile and continues working. Betty crosses to sink and begins cleaning vegetables and fish.

BETTY
(continuing)
Betty was astonished to see how
desperately without any sense John
put the can-goods away, but bit her
tongue.

JOHN
John, so pleased with how well he
was doing, suddenly noticed Betty
biting her tongue, and assumed she
was resisting telling him what to
do, and he smiled, gratefully, at
her.

John smiles a toothy smile, then back to work.

BETTY
John never noticed, Betty thought,
that she had left the kitchen door
askew, so he could leave any time
he chose.

JOHN
And now John knew he would soon give
Betty one on the jaw and a couple
in the ribs --

He has started to laugh as has Betty. Then he walks over and stands behind Betty, very close, and says in a low voice, slowly and sexually:

(CONTINUED)

14 CONTINUED: (4)

JOHN

(continuing)

John knew, at any moment, he would throw Betty on the kitchen floor and take her... making thrilling... and extraordinary... love to her.

BETTY

Reading his look, Betty thought, 'I'll be the judge of that.'

JOHN

'Just like her mother,' John thought. All that --

BETTY

(interrupting; quickly)

John. My mother died, John. Two months ago.

JOHN

What?!

BETTY

(nodding slightly)

Almost... two months.

JOHN

What happened?

BETTY

It's uh -- it's called an aneurysm. I wanted to -- I always hoped I would make it big once more before --
(losing her voice
in emotion)

JOHN

Oh, I'm -- I'm sorry. I'm --

BETTY

(crying and trying to stop; keeps wiping her eyes)

I know you are, John.

JOHN

(really nice)

Why don't you move in here?

(CONTINUED)

14 CONTINUED: (5)

BETTY
(speaking over blowing
her nose)
Why, are you moving out?

JOHN
I mean it.

BETTY
I know, thanks, John. But we did
that play. Three years. Curtain.
That's a long run for a bomb.

JOHN
Maybe just for a while.

BETTY
Thanks anyway, John.
(trying to be funny now)
Listen, at thirty-seven it's not
like I'm an orphan. I'm just here
for one thing.

JOHN
What?

BETTY
A free meal.

She's back at work as we...

CUT TO:

15 EXT. BEACH IN FRONT OF JOHN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

John stands in a parka, down at the ocean in front of his house. We SEE him head on. He seems thoughtful... alone ... more so perhaps because of the rain and darkness and solitude of the beach. After a moment John turns and walks back to his house, and it is then that we SEE Betty is in the parka with him, her arms around him and her head buried in his back. They walk together, in step, back to John's house.

CUT TO:

16 EXT. LANA'S POOL AND GARDEN AREA - DAY

It is an assemblage of glamorous and clearly important film people, gathered at an outdoor brunch at Lana's.

(CONTINUED)

16

CONTINUED:

Some swim, others sun, most stand around posing or in animated conversation, while many sit or stand in groups, eating or drinking.

THREE MUSICIANS wander about PLAYING MEXICAN MUSIC THROUGH-OUT this SEQUENCE.

Lana moves about hostessing. She is older, still pretty, blonder, still in her large tinted sunglasses through which her eyes can be seen watching everything, and she wears a too tight blouse and a hostess skirt.

Betty and John have just arrived and are getting drinks from a WAITER. Seeing Lana coming toward them, Betty smiles and pokes John who turns and looks.

LANA
(kissing Betty on
both cheeks)
Darling! Better late than never.
What, you thought you'd make an
entrance? Oy vay, look who's back
in the picture.
(she gives Betty a
look, then back to
John)
John, my beauty, give us a kiss.
Look at those eyes. Gorgeous.

John kisses her tokenly and she squeals.

LANA
(continuing)
Chills.

JOHN
(forcing a niceness)
Now the word is out that you're the
hottest agent in pictures.

LANA
The word, never believe. The hottest,
always. Don't ask.
(to Betty, smiling
too much)
I bet all your friends are as
surprised as me.

BETTY
(ignoring that, she
speaks to John)
Lana gives two or three of these kind
of parties every week now.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

16 CONTINUED: (2)

BETTY (CONT'D)

Fame city.

(looking around)

Lana? Who are all these people?

LANA

You'd know who they were you wouldn't have been unemployed the last few years. They're not attorneys.

She laughs and smacks a kiss toward John as if she is kidding. She is not.

JOHN

You handle all these people?

LANA

The ones I want. God forbid the rest.

(to Betty)

You should never wear blue.

JOHN

Thank you for inviting us.

LANA

(holds John's arm)

Oh, it's 'us' again, be still my heart. I love it. And I was just about to say I always invite Betty because a person should have some available girls. I'm glad I didn't.

Lana turns, waving and calling to SALLY, an actress who has just entered.

LANA

(continuing)

Darling Sally. I'll see you in a minute.

(back to Betty and John)

What the hell is she wearing. Nobody said costumes. Lend me a cigarette.

Betty gives Lana a cigarette. John lights it.

BETTY

John and I bumped into each other in the funni -- Lana, look. There's Carolyn Keyes.

(CONTINUED)

16 CONTINUED: (3)

LANA
(indicating Betty)
It's too mu -- she's too much. What,
I got every studio head, top producer,
director, stars, who does she notice?
Carolyn Keyes, who should drop dead.
(to John, indicating
Betty again)
Who writes her material?
(teasing, but quietly
to John, almost out
the side of her mouth)
John, I'm begging. The last time I
thought, 'well, that's it... over...
finished... kaput...' I thought
'they really mean it.' Which shows
you shouldn't even believe yourself.
This whole relationship is to die.

She indicates the entrance where two couples stand talking.

LANA
(continuing)
Ooo... I don't like that when some
of the biggies leave early.
(fixing her hair in
Betty's sunglasses)
Go talk to people. Get some work.
You and Mr. Terrific. And for
Christmas we'll get you a revolving
door for this one.
(indicating John)

BETTY
I'll call you tomorrow, Lana.

As Lana leaves them she calls loudly and hurries to the
exiting couple at the entrance, talking almost baby talk,
teasing.

LANA
Look who I see who is leaving.
Gene and Cynthia Shepard.

Betty takes off sunglasses, cleans them and smiles at
John, aware of his anger.

BETTY
She's very big now, John. One word
from her I could be (whew) such a
star. I'm not kidding. Truth.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

16 CONTINUED: (4)

BETTY (CONT'D)

She's just upset right now -- the party and -- people leaving and all. It's just she's very sensitive.

JOHN

(flabbergasted)

She's what?

BETTY

She is, John. Very sensitive. John, be nice, please. It's the first really important party she's invited me to in three years. And, John, I don't want to criticize, but she likes it pronounced Lana (Lahna), not Lana (Lanna), which I've been telling you for three years.

JOHN

And as I always answer, I think she ought to try spelling it backwards.

BETTY

I've never found that funny, John.

JOHN

I really would like to understand why she hates me.

BETTY

Oh, please, John.

JOHN

Obviously you didn't tell her I was coming. Or did you think she wouldn't notice. Was I invited?

BETTY

(looking around as though people might hear)

Let's drop it, wanna?

A very handsome man is standing, smiling knowingly, staring at Betty. John sees him staring, a second later Betty does also. She knows the man and waves. He nods, staring. Betty looks quickly away.

JOHN

Who is that?

(CONTINUED)

16 CONTINUED: (5)

BETTY

Some guy.

(angry, but keeping
calm and voice low
so no one can hear)

John, now stop it, right now. Never mind about how I know people or whether you got a personal invitation or the sudden news that Lana is such a terrible person. She's always been a terrible person. She's an agent. But while everybody else has been dumpin' on me these last years, she's stayed a friend, and that's a lot.

JOHN

I just want to say one thing -- two things. That woman is the worst person in this world, and the second thing is she doesn't even like you enough to be your agent.

Betty looks at him, very hurt.

JOHN

(continuing)

I'm sorry.

BETTY

Be nice, John -- if for no other reason but you're the only person here I know.

EVELLE, who has been staring at Betty, crosses over, takes her hand and lets it be known he knows her very well. His wife, LOIS, joins them.

EVELLE

Hello, my Betty.

Betty tries to stop what Evelle is doing.

BETTY

Oh, John -- John -- this is Lois and Evelle Wheeler -- this is John Harris. John's a lawyer. In Beverly Hills.
(being silly; it's
uncomfortable)

Lois -- Evelle -- John -- Betty.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

16 CONTINUED: (6)

BETTY (CONT'D)

I'm clutching on to everyone I know today. I really have been out of it, she says, clutch, clutch. Oh, John, Evelle is... a genius is what he is... he wrote the first picture I ever did. If you'd written the second one I could have said 'he wrote the last picture I ever did.'

LOIS

That's where I know you from.

EVELLE

She was wonderful in it, the crazy secretary. Wasn't she? Very wonderful.

Betty curtsies, then is immediately embarrassed.

LOIS

Yes, you were.

(turns to her husband,
smiling)

Ah. Ev, we should say goodbye to Lana.

(to Betty)

We have this Mexican maid who has today off but stayed with the kids so we could come. Ev, we've got to go.

EVELLE

Good to see you.

He takes Betty's hand and looks suggestively right at her. It becomes very personal.

EVELLE

(continuing)

Take care of yourself, ya' hear?

Betty nods and giggles self-consciously, finding a thread to pull off of her sleeve.

JOHN

(shaking Evelle's hand)

Goodbye.

Lois and Evelle exit. Betty waves her fingers 'goodbye' and looks around quickly for some place to walk to avoid conversation now with John.

(CONTINUED)

16 CONTINUED: (7)

She takes John's hand, giving him a quick smile, and leads him into the middle of the party. It is a very loud and large party now and Betty and John wander in and out of many groups and past many people, but Betty knows no one and is demonstrably bothered by it. Finally they are near the edge, standing alone.

Betty, having alternated between smiling and looking really disturbed, now pretends to look for something in her purse.

BETTY

I used to come into a party and know everybody. Everybody in the room. Remember? I'm like out of the business. What's happening?

JOHN

Just don't make it so important to yourself.

BETTY

It's just my life, that's all. John, please could we walk and not stand here like the poor relations?

They walk, Betty visibly upset as she tries half-smiling or half-nodding to people self-consciously... but she, indeed, recognizes no friends. Suddenly:

BETTY

Nancy and Doug!

She runs over to them, John following.

BETTY

(continuing; calls)

Don't move!

We haven't seen Nancy since "The Chorus Girls" and she is older and more sophisticated and beautiful. Nancy and Betty embrace, while John and DOUG shake hands, then all switch partners for another embrace and/or handshake. They are right next to the strolling Mexican Band, so we can't hear them, but it is obvious they are surprised to see John with Betty again, and all four are openly fond of each other.

Betty, shouting and miming, demonstrates walking around this party not knowing anyone. Nancy, aching from the sound, indicates a distant table for them to sit, and John and Doug decide to leave them and go get some food.

(CONTINUED)

16 CONTINUED: (8)

The women begin to stroll, talking, and are interrupted by a handsome MAN stopping and kissing Betty, speaking a second, then exiting.

They continue walking and edging their way when ANOTHER MAN reaches out and grabs Betty's hand, a lascivious grin on his face, as he nods a very familiar 'hello'. Betty, bothered, nods back and continues on her way with Nancy.

CAMERA MOVES IN CLOSE so we now HEAR Betty and Nancy as they stroll.

BETTY

God. This place is crawling with strangers and old boyfriends. There's David Kincaid. Walk like that, I don't want him to see me. He thinks he's so attractive. He's short as a duck. Oh, there's Tim Landay.

She places Nancy a little in front of her as they walk, and Betty succeeds in hiding from both men by walking snugly and matching Nancy's step. All done subtly.

BETTY

(continuing)

Don't say one word. He's a twerp. I went out with him in a very crazy period of my life.

(slight pause)

Last month.

Nancy laughs. They have arrived at an empty table. They sit down.

BETTY

(continuing)

I think I was invited here as the 'token failure'. Whew.

NANCY

I'm so glad I stopped acting. Look at it all. Oh, there's an old face we both went with. Stanley Bauman.

BETTY

Nancy! I never went with Stan Bauman. I hardly know him.

(CONTINUED)

16 CONTINUED: (9)

NANCY

You most certainly did. Don't you remember? Right before you had that mad thing with George Christian.

BETTY

I did no --
(she gasps as she remembers)
You're right.

NANCY

Here comes our food. I have had the most enormous appetite lat --

She has turned to Betty and notices Betty looking down at the ground, very upset.

NANCY

(continuing)
What's wrong?

BETTY

(forces a big smile)
Nothing.

John and Doug arrive with the food and are putting it down with much oooing and ahhing.

JOHN

We got all hung up because the waiters and bartenders were all switching jobs or something.

DOUG

I got you cheesecake because we have dinner at the McAllisters' after that screening.

NANCY

I love that the surprise is always cheesecake. Doesn't it look heavenly?

Betty leans in to John so no one can hear her.

BETTY

(quietly)
Hold my hand, will ya', John?

John takes her hand under the table where no one can see.

(CONTINUED)

16 CONTINUED: (10)

LANA
(passing by; stops
to announce)
I could die. Don't ask. Half of
Hollywood here and I'm out of grass.

Lana moves away.

CUT TO:

17 INT. BETTY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The room is dark. A figure is moving around, getting dressed, something, like movement around the room, the SOUND of material. In the dark John, waking up, stirs in the bed. The figure is Betty, putting a raincoat over her knee-length flannel nightgown.

JOHN
(almost a whisper)
Betty?

BETTY
(almost whispering
back)
Shhh, John, go back to sleep.

JOHN
What are you doing?

BETTY
I'm gonna take a drive. Go back to
sleep.

JOHN
What's wrong?

BETTY
Nothing.

JOHN
What is it?

Betty opens and slips out the door, then closes it after her.

CUT TO:

18 INT. BETTY'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The room is dark. The bedroom door opens and John, very sleepy, stands in the doorway.

(CONTINUED)

18 CONTINUED:

Betty, sleeping on the couch with her coat thrown over her, is now visible. John crosses over to her, kneels down, nudges her. She wakes up.

BETTY
(whispering; very tired)
I took a drive. I didn't want to wake you up again, John.

JOHN
Are you all right?

BETTY
(nods; gets up)
So many people are afraid of dying.
I'm afraid I'll never die.

She stands and crosses into the dark bedroom. John pauses a moment, then follows her, bringing her coat.

CUT TO:

19 INT. JOHN'S CAR - DAY

John and Betty are driving along silently when suddenly Betty sits up and takes notice of a man standing on the corner, wearing a painter's cap and white overalls, seemingly retarded, and mixing paint for a large white house he is in the process of painting.

BETTY
(her voice urgent and secretive)
John. Slow down. Slow down, John.
Look. Look. There's that man.

JOHN
What about him?

BETTY
That's the man I've told you about for years. 'The Painter.' Don't you remember? That's him. Don't go so fast. Look.

JOHN
The what?

BETTY
'The Painter,' John, look!

(CONTINUED)

19 CONTINUED:

JOHN

(exasperated)

At what? It's a man who's painting
a house.

They have passed him and Betty now is turned around, sitting on her knees, looking out the back window. She does this next with increasing intensity:

BETTY

That man has been painting that house for fourteen years. Don't you remember me telling you about 'The Painter'? I saw that crazy man the first week I was in Hollywood, painting that house. The first week I got to Hollywood, when I lived up there. He was just starting then. I passed him every day. Painting the same goddamn house.

JOHN

Maybe he's trying to get it just right.

BETTY

That's sad. A big, fat, swollen man painting a house for fourteen years.

(pause; almost to
herself)

The dumb jerk.

CUT TO:

20 INT. MOVIE STUDIO

Outer office, but visible to where the auditioning girls are waiting in this glass room. Everything in the room is glass. Walls, coffee table, chairs, all glass or clear plastic. Betty crosses the small corridor, through the glass doors, into the room. She speaks to the receptionist and sits down. She takes a magazine and leafs through it.

21 BETTY'S POV

Of the other girls in the office. Each is noticeably ten years younger than Betty.

CUT TO:

22 INT. BETTY'S APARTMENT - EVENING

John is alone, waiting in the living room. He wears a suit. Betty talks from the bedroom.

BETTY (O.S.)

... and it was like my agent said, good that I went over there anyway even if I wasn't that right, because at least they know I'm alive, for cripesake. I mean, know I'm back in circulation, ya' know? So it wasn't a lost afternoon, John. You should let me take you to dinner for waiting so long.

(she enters)

All set.

She smiles and John manages to smile back. She is dressed in clothes ten years too young for her. Her make-up is too close to a young girl's make-up. It is not that it is ugly... it is upsetting and unsettling. John almost doesn't look. He helps her on with her coat. They exit.

CUT TO:

INT. JOHN'S CAR - EVENING

John and Betty drive along in silence. Betty looking out the window on her side. After a second, suddenly, she swings her head around and faces front as she says:

BETTY

John, I'm not going to say a word, but look to your right.

John looks, and there is The Painter painting the same house white. John then turns and looks at Betty who has her lips pursed in an "I'm not going to say a word" pucker.

CUT TO:

INT. BETTY'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - DAY

Betty is obviously late as she sits at her telephone-answering service-machine recording a message, while at the same time finishing dressing by putting on panty hose and shoes. She is leaning toward the microphone on the dresser. Her voice too sweet, too high and all over-pronounced:

BETTY

Hello. This is Betty Bird.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

24 CONTINUED:

BETTY (CONT'D)

You are hearing my answering service machine because I'm not at home. But don't hang up. When you hear the beep, please leave your first name, last name, any message, oh, and please, please leave your phone number as I've lost my Week At A Glance and all my telephone numbers and everything. Anyway, start talking when you hear the beep, okay? All right, here is --

And the BEEP SOUNDS and the machine shuts off. Betty groans, gets up, waving her hand at the machine, and as she hurries out the door, she says to herself:

BETTY

(continuing)

S'good enough.

CUT TO:

25 INT. MOTION PICTURE STUDIO - OFFICE - DAY

Three well-dressed men are sitting behind one desk, while Betty sits facing them. She is reading from a television script with the CASTING MAN, who sits in front and to the side of the three EXECUTIVES. Betty is in the middle of a speech.

BETTY

(reading)

... and, Sheriff -- I know it was him.

CASTING MAN

(reading)

What makes you so sure, Lucy?

BETTY

(reading)

The critter's eyes. I been in the saloon business long enough, Sheriff, I can tell a man's whole character by his eyes.

CASTING MAN

(reading)

And you think he's the dude who killed Jim Dodd.

BETTY

(reading)

That's the man, Sheriff.

(CONTINUED)

5 CONTINUED:

CASTING MAN

(reading)

If he's our culprit, Lucy, I'll get him.

BETTY

(reading)

I know, Sheriff. I can tell -- by your eyes.

Although that is the end of the scene, Betty keeps looking down at the page another moment. Then, when no one speaks, she looks up and smiles. They smile back. She speaks in many pauses and breaks:

BETTY

(continuing)

It's a cute scene. Well-written. I mean, it's a kind of a... interesting character. Lot of... stuff going on.

(a slight pause)

Uh -- would -- would you like me to read it again?

FIRST MAN

(standing)

No. That was very good. Very good.

Betty stands up... tries not to look disappointed... smiles.

BETTY

You're only as good as your material.

She giggles and shrugs shoulders. Then, to Casting Man:

BETTY

(continuing)

Thank you, Beau. Thank you all.

CASTING MAN

Thanks for coming in, Betty.

BETTY

Oh, sure.

(waves her fingers to the Executives)

Thank you all. Bye-bye.

FIRST MAN

Goodbye.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Betty opens the door to exit and we SEE, in the outer office, a roomful of girls waiting to read... Most look quite like Betty. As she exits...

CUT TO:

INT. BETTY'S APARTMENT - DAY

It is warm, and only the screen door is closed in Betty's apartment. Betty is dressed in a man's shirt only, and is hanging up the phone. John, looking worried, appears suddenly at the screen door. Betty looks up, surprised.

JOHN

Are you all right?
(opening the screen
door and entering)
I haven't seen nor heard from you
in four days.

BETTY

(nervous, lighting
a cigarette)
Yeah.

JOHN

What's up? You've been on that
phone all day.

BETTY

(nods)
It's been that kind of a day. Kind
of a week. Kind of life. I called
every person in my Week At a Glance
address book. I was just starting
over again -- I'm at the Cs.

JOHN

(seriously)
What's in your head, Betty?

Betty shakes her head, "nothing." Then shrugs. Then,
equally serious:

BETTY

It's like Lana says... I think I stay
around you so I have an excuse... for
being a flop... that's all. I don't
want an excuse anymore. I want a
career.

(CONTINUED)

26 CONTINUED:

JOHN
I don't care anymore if you work.
I'm not like I was.

BETTY
(smiles)
Thanks. John, don't come by. Don't
call or anything, okay?

John looks at her, then walks to the door and savagely
kicks it open. He gets outside and grabs the door with
both hands and slams it shut with all the force of his
strength.

CUT TO:

27 INT. JOHN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

No sound. John is asleep in bed. The bedroom door opens
and Betty enters. She wears a coat over her pajamas. She
closes the door. It's now dark but they can be SEEN. She
gets into bed with John.

BETTY
(whispers)
John? John?

He starts, waking up.

BETTY
(continuing)
Oh, John... I'm really sorry. All
I do is hurt people. I didn't want
to sound mean, John. I didn't want
to hurt you. Not at all. Go to
sleep. Okay? Go on back to sleep.
Goodnight, John. I wonder what a
nervous breakdown is. Goodnight,
John.

Putting her arm around John, she goes to sleep.

CUT TO:

28 INT. OFFICE - DAY

Betty is auditioning, with TWO other GIRLS (one black),
for a commercial. About ten very serious-looking men
watch from the far end of a long conference table as the
Girls try balancing the copy from which they are reading
and the men's shirts (props) piled on the table to be
used for demonstration.

(CONTINUED)

28

CONTINUED:

BETTY
 (reading)
 Mary. My wash is just sh --
 (she looks up at the
 other two Girls)
 What is that word -- oh, shine.
 (she starts laughing)
 I almost said 'shit.'

Now the other two Girls roar with laughter. Betty camps.

BETTY
 (continuing)
 Mary. My wash is just shit!

The Girls shriek with laughter. Betty looks at the men, none of whom laugh. Betty, quickly, to the Girls:

BETTY
 (continuing)
 Okay, we have to get serious now...
 let's settle down. Okay? Okay.
 (reading)
 Mary. My wash is just sh --

And the three Girls just scream with laughter.

CUT TO:

INT. MOVIE SET - DAY

A scene is being shot. Betty sits in a chair off the set and either mouths and quietly acts the words of the scene from the script she is reading, or watches the scene being shot.

When the DIRECTOR calls "Print," he talks to the cameraman for a second, then leaves the set with the script girl and a Casting Man, who indicates for Betty to follow them.

Betty follows them to the Director's trailer dressing room, stopping twice to kiss a crew member and her old hair-dresser.

The Casting Man stands in the doorway, letting Betty in.

INT. DIRECTOR'S TRAILER

DIRECTOR
 (looking at list
 from his table)
 Are you Audrey Noleen?

(CONTINUED)

30 CONTINUED:

BETTY

Betty Bird.

DIRECTOR

(finding her name)

Oh, uh-huh.

(to Casting Man)

She's not what I have in mind at all,
Jack. I was thinking of a beautiful,
you know, big-busted girl.

(to Betty)

I don't want to be rude but why waste
all our time, huh?

BETTY

Oh, sure. Listen, thank you anyway.

(holding the script)

Shall I just leave this then? I
could just read anyway, if you like.
Give you an idea... since I'm here.

DIRECTOR

(working on his script
already; looks up)

No, that's not necessary. But thank
you.

BETTY

(putting down script)

Sure. Have a good day at the office.
Bye-bye. Thank you.

She smiles and exits.

31 INT. BETTY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Betty is getting dressed in the dark. Putting on a rain-coat over her pajamas. John awakens. He gets out of bed hurriedly and stops her at the door. Hurriedly, he is getting into pants, jacket and loafers and follows her out of the room.

32 INT. JOHN'S CAR - SERIES OF CUTS - NIGHT

They drive. All around the city and suburbs. People on the streets looking in the car window (the CAMERA).

Betty sits looking out the window on her side while John drives.

John stops the car on top of Mulholland Drive, overlooking all of Los Angeles.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

John starts the car and off they drive. To Hollywood Boulevard, the Strip, La Cienega. Betty stares out the window. At one point, she reaches over with one arm, her face still looking out the window, and feels John. The top of his head, his features, the side of his face, under his chin, his neck and shoulders. Then she resumes her position at the window.

BETTY

Let's go home.
(she turns to John)
It's almost gone.

JOHN

(turns to her)
What?

Betty takes John's right hand. She resumes her position at the window. She holds the hand so tightly. She kisses it, then just holds it, staring out her window.

BETTY

Let's not talk. Huh, John?

John looks bothered, but doesn't understand. She continues staring out the window.

CUT TO:

INT. BETTY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

John seems to be sleeping... Betty is wide awake, thinking. She stays where she is on her side of the bed.

BETTY

(whispering; waking
John up)
John? John? John, say something
nice about me... so I can go to
sleep.
(pause)
John?

JOHN

(after a pause)
I love you.

BETTY

(pause)
Forget it.

She gives him a dirty look and turns away from him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOHN
(after a second)
What's wrong?
(pause)
That was something nice...

Betty fakes snoring. John, furious, lays back, wide awake.

CUT TO:

EXT. BETTY'S APARTMENT BUILDING - MORNING

John and Betty walking toward their cars -- his is parked behind hers. They come upon MRS. DARE getting into her car. She wears a formal and tiara and theatrical make-up ... which looks most odd at this hour in the morning. They wave to her and she waves back.

JOHN
(as they approach her
line of vision)
It looks like your landlady stayed
out all night.

BETTY
She's going to work, John. She's
what they call a 'dress-extra'...
extras make more money if they dress
up.
(calls across a few
rows of cars to her)
Hi, Mrs. Dare. John just came over
for coffee.

John gasps and Betty pokes him, going right on.

BETTY
(continuing)
I'm going to the beauty parlor.
Y'won't know me.

Betty strikes a model pose and Mrs. Dare laughs and waves again, getting in her car. John and Betty continue walking the long distance to their cars.

BETTY
She's married to a lawyer.

JOHN
She is not.

BETTY
She is.

(CONTINUED)

34 CONTINUED:

But Betty is lying and cannot keep a straight face.

BETTY

(continuing)

Extras are really considered the lowest. All day long, they sit on these long benches in the corner and just gossip... or play cards... or think up all these cheap ways to make extra money.

JOHN

And do you mean they all go to work that way? Imagine passing that on the freeway. Don't they have dressing rooms?

BETTY

Listen, it's probably the way I'll end up.

They are at their cars. John gets into his. Betty leans down and kisses him.

BETTY

(continuing)

John, you really are a looker. Why don't you become an actor and stop all this law crap.

Betty gets into her car.

35 INT. MOVIE STUDIO - OFFICE - DAY

Betty sits with her agent, LESTER. Two men sit behind a desk. The SECOND CASTING MAN sits between the two pair. In the middle of conversation, they all are laughing at something Betty has said.

BETTY

(laughing -- trying to
stop -- hitting herself
in the head)

I promised myself I would never again tell a dirty joke to an attractive man.

(raises her arms in
the air)

And here I do it to four.

(leaning in, cupping
hand to mouth)

But did you hear the one about --

(CONTINUED)

85

CONTINUED:

Betty doubles over, laughing, and they all join her.

Lester is openly fond and proud of Betty. Himself a humorless man, all this is self-conscious for him. He is about sixty, always smiles, humble.

LESTER

This one, she cracks everybody up.
I don't know why I'm her agent. She
doesn't need an agent.

SECOND CASTING AGENT

(to the two men)

I think of Betty for the part of
the waitress or the lesbian.

They look at her a second.

SECOND CASTING AGENT

(continuing)

Betty? Do you want to tell Mr.
Kilgallen and Mr. Felix what you've
done?

BETTY

Well... uh... I was in a lot of
shows in New York. And then I
played Annie in "The Chorus Girls"
which ran for four years. Which you
probably saw. And I did, oh -- two
movies and uh -- after that, most of
the half-hour comedy shows... and
what else... well, the last thing I
did was... God, see how long it's
been.

(she laughs)

Oh, yes, that medical show --
whatsis -- well, I played the
forgetful nurse. Lately I haven't
worked a lot honestly. In the last
two or three years... I mean nobody
tells you when you're not an ingenue
anymore. But I know I'm right for
more...

(she leans back, sucks
in her cheeks, and
posing as though very
grand:)

... mature parts now. And all...
so, God... this job could be my
comeback!

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

35 CONTINUED:

BETTY (CONT'D)
(she laughs)
And I can learn to say 'Adam and Eve
on a raft' for the part of the
waitress.
(slight pause)
And for the lesbian -- well -- I can
always learn to drive a truck.

36 INT. JOHN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Betty and John and GINGER and PAUL are playing Monopoly
on the low coffee table. A fire is going. They are
drinking wine. Betty is very intense.

JOHN
Betty, it's your turn.

BETTY
(overly patient)
I know, John. You can only trade
on your own turn and I want to trade
on my own turn. Now, what I want
is -- Ginger, oh -- oh, no, you
don't have anything. Paul's got
the whole side of the board there.

PAUL
It's all the cheap property, though.
I'll trade you this side of the
board for your greens and Marvin
Gardens.

BETTY
Paul, what am I, a ninny? I hope
he's a better architect than a
business man.

GINGER
I'll trade with you, Paul.

BETTY
Ginger, excuse me, darling, but it's
not your turn.
(a slight pause)
Listen, John, what will you take for
Boardwalk?

JOHN
Nothing.

(CONTINUED)

36 CONTINUED:

BETTY
I'll give you all the reds, the
utilities and my two railroads.

JOHN
No.

BETTY
And five hundred dollars.

JOHN
No.

BETTY
Why?

JOHN
Because you'd have that whole side
of the board --

BETTY
I'll give you all my property except
the greens and Park Place.

JOHN
No. C'mon, roll the dice.

BETTY
I'll give you all my other property
and all my money. All of it.

JOHN
No.

BETTY
(a quiet announcement --
almost martyred)
If you give me Boardwalk, I will go
to bed with you right this second.

She slams down all of her property, then arranges it out
in front of her, straightens her money, not looking at
anyone, her face set in a determined superiority. They
look at her, then not at each other. There is a silence.

JOHN
Well. I'll take -- the reds.

He passes her Boardwalk. She takes Boardwalk, very happy,
gives him the reds.

BETTY
Okay. Even Steven.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

She rolls the dice and, although she is excited in moving her piece on the board, the others are in bewilderment.

BETTY
(continuing)
Hot dog.

She's very happy.

CUT TO:

7 INT. COCKTAIL LOUNGE - EARLY EVENING

John hurriedly enters the cocktail lounge, stands looking around. He sees TED waiting for him in a booth.

Ted is a failed director (and we must know it) who is now directing afternoon TV soap operas. His look is very much the look of the day, but his dress is too young. He acts the role of director. He drinks too much, is arrogant, loud, and is a little bit drunk... his insecurity is obvious.

JOHN
Hi, Ted. I'm late.

TED
I know.

JOHN
(looking for a waiter)
It was a divorce. Half the women file just to get their husbands back in line. What are you drinking?

TED
Vodka.

JOHN
(calling to the approaching Waiter)
I'll just have one of those.
(to Ted)
Betty's going to meet me here for dinner. You can stay or go. Whatever...
(effortfully casual)
How was she?

TED
Great.

(CONTINUED)

37 CONTINUED:

JOHN
Honestly?

TED
Great.

JOHN
She get the part?

TED
Oh, they don't know that yet. I
don't know that.

JOHN
(after a slight pause)
Was she terrible?

Ted looks.

JOHN
(continuing)
Why? I mean, can you say why?

TED
I don't know why. Let me level with
you, John. She told me she was the
same age we want the character --
thirty-six -- right?

JOHN
Thirty-seven.

TED
Well... let me just level. What
might have been cute at twenty-five
is just depressing at thirty-seven.
She's sad, John.

JOHN
(nods; a pause)
In your opinion can she act at all?

TED
Not at all. It was like some kid
imitating or something... but listen,
what do I know?

JOHN
I don't understand.

(CONTINUED)

37 CONTINUED: (2)

TED

She had a break once, John.

(to Waiter)

Bring a couple more.

JOHN

(watches him; a pause)

Then tell her.

At that moment Betty enters the lounge. Stopping to kiss the bartender and talk to or embrace the waiters. She spots John and begins to come over... As she suddenly sees Ted, she screams.

BETTY

I can't stand it! I'm going into cardiac arrest. I did the test for him today. You dirty guys, you -- you planned this! I should never have told you, John. I knew you went to school together.

(to Ted)

Why didn't you tell me at least you'd see me later. Oh, my God. How terrific. My heart is just pounding. Crazy.

(she holds his arm
with both of hers)

Oh, God. Is this weird?

(to Ted)

How was I? I mean, tell the truth.

(teasing)

Go ahead, I can take it.

(serious)

No, I mean really. I mean, I don't want to know if I got it. I don't care about that. See, I always think that when you don't get a thing, so what? Think of it like you were auditioning for the next thing, or the next.

(to the Waiter)

Billy, could I have two tonics with limes?

(to Ted)

I really worked on it hard, Ted. Please, an alcoholic mother with three children is not what you'd call my cup of tea. But I worked on it. John'll tell ya'. He cued me. Oh, Ted, that soap is going to be... revolutionary! Ohhhh.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

37 CONTINUED: (3)

BETTY (CONT'D)

You are going to be so rich and famous. That is... really... the best daytime thing I ever read. Ever! I mean, great is what it is. And God, I needed that today. I mean, just to be in front of a camera, for godsake. Oh, that felt so good. I mean, getting some confidence back. A chance to do something important. How was I? Ted? Tell the truth.

TED

(pause)

Great.

BETTY

Are you kidding? I didn't get it, did I?

TED

I don't know. Uh... there was one other girl who was up for the wife who was good too.

BETTY

So what if I come in second.

(pause)

Was I really good?

TED

Yeah.

BETTY

Because I, uh --

She can't control it. She has started to cry. She sits there and sobs uncontrollably.

CUT TO:

38 INT. BETTY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Betty is sitting up in bed, talking and smoking a cigarette. John is talking and watching Betty.

JOHN

(middle of conversation)

... and the company had guaranteed these five men contracts, so when they left their jobs, the company reneged and they were out of work.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

8 CONTINUED:

JOHN (CONT'D)

But this Judge... you know I can stay
separate from anything... but this
got to me. I should have won. I
should have won.

Betty hands John a cigarette as she gets up to change
clothes and get ready for bed.

BETTY

Would you put this out, John? I feel
so good about that test today. It
could happen. But I'm glad you did.

John, putting ashtray down, stops in the middle and turns
to her.

JOHN

Did what?

BETTY

I'm glad you won.

JOHN

(furious)

This is contempt.

(hurriedly, putting on
jacket and tie)

That is just goddamned contempt.
Rude, thoughtless, selfish contempt.
I don't even exist for you. With
your movie star dreams, who to call,
what to do next to fill up your day.
You don't need me right now... you
just need a body. So why don't you
do it out front. Next time you want
to see me again, at least do it
honestly. Just call up and say 'I
need a body'.

John exits angrily, slamming door.

CUT TO:

9 EXT. JOHN'S CARPORT - NIGHT

John is parking behind Betty's car. He seems surprised
to see it there. John is wearing a business suit, having
just come from work. He crosses into the courtyard and
up into the house.

CUT TO:

40 INT. JOHN'S HOUSE - 6:00 P.M.

John looks around but doesn't see Betty. Looks out from the deck down to the beach. He takes off his jacket and tie and crosses into the bedroom.

CUT TO:

41 INT. JOHN'S BEDROOM - EARLY EVENING

John looks around as he does not see Betty. He begins changing clothes and suddenly notices Betty is in his bed, apparently naked, with the sheets gathered up around her, watching him.

BETTY

I didn't get the soap. But it's okay, John. I mean better than okay. So what, I was just thinking. That's the bottom anyway. In some way it's all starting to make sense to me. It has to have some meaning, you know? And it does. It just makes you stronger. I mean I'm still in there -- and I'm sticking -- and that kind of punishment -- duck soup. And if you keep taking the punishment, eventually you have to win. Eventually. And I'm a sticker. And I'm gonna' win.

Her sadness shows as she has begun to tear. And about to let go and cry now, she says:

BETTY

(continuing)

I need a body, John.

CUT TO:

42 INT. JOHN'S CAR - DAY

John is driving in his car and Betty is following behind in her car. Betty starts BEEPING and BEEPING to get John's attention. He looks in the rearview mirror to see what is the problem, and sees her pointing vigorously to the right, mouthing, "Look, over there". John looks and sees the Painter painting the same house the same white. John looks in the rearview mirror again and Betty is raising her eyes to heaven and doing the screw-loose sign.

CUT TO:

43 INT. BETTY'S APARTMENT - DAY

John is struggling to open a large box, all gift-wrapped. It is a piece of luggage.

JOHN

It's nice.

BETTY

(very excited, pulls
him out the door)

C'mon, John, it's your birthday!

They exit.

CUT TO:

44 EXT. HOLLYWOOD BOULEVARD - DAY

Betty and John are getting out of his car, which is parked in front of a dirty movie theatre.

JOHN

You're not going to take me to a
dirty movie.

BETTY

Look around, John.

John moves, looking around. Puzzled.

BETTY

(continuing)

Very cold. Keep looking. Warmer.
Warmer. Red stinging hot!

JOHN

(puzzled)

What? What's going on?

BETTY

Look. You're on my star! See. From
when I did the series. I never showed
you that before. Between Laura Hope
Crews and Jimmy Boyd. See. Happy
birthday, John, from a real TV star.
I wish it wasn't in front of a dirty
movie theatre.

John has been looking at her star and now looks up, not knowing what to say, but she is seriously looking down at it. She feels him looking at her and looks up, smiling. She walks around the star so as not to step on that square, takes John's arms, and they exit toward the car.

CUT TO:

45 INT. MEXICAN RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Very authentic. Rather good crowd. No Mexicans, except the help. Betty and John are sitting on the same side (wallside) of a table facing out, drinking Margaritas. Suddenly we HEAR and then SEE THREE GUITAR PLAYERS following a MEXICAN WAITRESS who has two bean tostados on two plates, but one has a candle lighted in the middle and, along with Betty, they are all singing "Happy birthday". John looks like he's about to die, but smiles.

CUT TO:

46 INT. BETTY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

It is so dark we can't really see much of anything. We HEAR HARD BREATHING. The SOUND OF KISSES. A moment of quiet. Then:

BETTY
(hushed)
Happy birthday, John.

CUT TO:

47 EXT. HOLLYWOOD BOULEVARD - NIGHT

Betty and John are in a limousine. Traffic moving slowly. The Kleig lights are SEEN a block ahead. They inch along. Betty is visibly upset.

BETTY
God, I am nervous. Isn't that ridiculous? But it's been so long since I've been to a premiere. I don't even know how long.

JOHN
(looking out window)
Would you rather get out and walk from here? This traffic is ridiculous. We could make better time.

BETTY
John, are you crazy?

JOHN
Well, we're going to be late.

BETTY
Oh, John, you're not supposed to get there early. It's all different now. Everything -- for everybody though, I mean. The whole industry.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

47 CONTINUED:

BETTY (CONT'D)

I wish you could have seen it then,
John. Thank you for coming tonight.

JOHN

S'okay, lady. Driver, do you want
to pick up and get in the closer lane?

BETTY

Uh -- driver? Never mind.
(to John)
John, he knows what he's doing...

JOHN

What if we hate the movie.

BETTY

I have never really hated a movie.

JOHN

Never?

BETTY

No, they all have something to say in
a way. Now when we get out there are
two paths. We'll take the front one,
the red carpet. That's for the
photographers and they interview you
for television and all. You don't
have to say anything. Just smile.
Because we look so fantastic together.
(gasps)

Now you know why I asked you. I'm
kidding. On the square.

JOHN

What are you rattling on about?

BETTY

Okay, now you follow me, John, and
don't worry, okay? I'll talk so you
don't have to worry. Listen, John,
forget it. When we get out, don't
take the red carpet, take the blue
carpet, the one behind the cameras,
and I'll meet you on the other end.
Okay? Oh, I hope I don't wet my pants.

CUT TO:

48 EXT. THEATRE FRONT - NIGHT

Betty and John getting out of the limousine.

(CONTINUED)

48 CONTINUED:

Three ushers are leading the celebrities and separating them. Many spectators. Bleachers and sidewalk filled. Much taking of photos, but no one photographs Betty, even though it is obvious she is anticipating it.

Betty and John get to the red carpet and an usher escorts her to the blue carpet behind the cameras. Betty starts to speak, but turns and smiles at John, and they walk past the autograph seekers, fans, and newly arriving stars who are being led to the red carpet.

BETTY
(walking with John
toward the entrance)
You have the tickets, John? I should
have said something to that kid. He
didn't recognize me. But I knew you
didn't want to do it anyway.

She hurries somewhat ahead of John before he can reply -- he looks after her and takes out the tickets, catching up with her at the door. Ticket-taker rips the tickets in half, hands the stubs to John, Betty turns and smiles at him and they enter the theatre.

CUT TO:

49 INT. JOHN'S HOUSE AT BEACH - EVENING

In front of a fire, John and Betty are finishing eating. Betty pours coffee. As the SCENE PROGRESSES, she exits and enters the room, still talking but clearing dishes and food from the bench on which they've been eating while seated on the floor.

BETTY
You didn't even miss that there was
no meat, I bet, did you? I'm so much
better since I gave up meat. The
masseuse in the Valley says just
vegetables flush you right out. Did
you miss that there was no meat?

JOHN
Yes.

BETTY
You did not.

JOHN
I did.

(CONTINUED)

49 CONTINUED:

BETTY

I know you didn't, John. And are you going to feel so much better. Wait'll you see.

A pause. They drink coffee.

BETTY

(continuing)

God, is it quiet. So depressing.

JOHN

It's the surf. Listen. Enjoy the peace and quiet.

BETTY

I hate that sound. It never stops.

(imitates the 'whoosh'
sound of the ocean)

When I sleep here I have to pretend it's the traffic. Plus I hate peace and quiet. You get enough of that when you're dead. John, you're one person that the last thing you need is peace and quiet. You should move to Switzerland, John... nothing ever happens there.

JOHN

Where should you move?

BETTY

Nowhere. I am exactly like America. I am. What I would like to do -- if they'd let me go -- is to go over to Red China and sing "Alexander's Ragtime Band". Because then I think they'd understand us.

John laughs hard.

BETTY

(continuing)

You don't understand. You know what I really should do? I should do a U.S.O. tour for the American troops in the Middle East. Or wherever we go next... Korea, Viet Nam, wherever... Now what it would be is, well there'd be hundreds and thousands of troops. As far as you can see. Up to my ying-yang in troop. As far as you can see.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

BETTY (CONT'D)

And me up on this platform they've
built, in a fabulous costume, singing.
And rain. Raining like a fucker. And
all the soldiers holding newspapers
and coats and anything they can find
over their heads. And I'll have
nothing over me. And I'll be singing...

(she begins very
dramatically in the
middle of "God Bless
America")

"To the mountains,
To the valleys,
To the oceans,
White with foam.
God Bless America,
My home, sweet home,

(she cups her hands
to her mouth and
shouts heroically)

And yours too, fellas.

(she hurriedly winds
up the last part)

"God bless America, my home sweet home."

Then she does a variety of impressive bows.

JOHN

(after watching a moment)

And then does everyone join in?

BETTY

Not when it's my turn. John, don't
you wish you could do that?

JOHN

I do that. In court. Quite a lot.

BETTY

Oh if you could, John, your whole life
would be changed.

JOHN

Why do you always want to change my
life?

BETTY

I don't know, John. You're so
interesting, so stimulating.

She drops her head and snores.

(CONTINUED)

49 CONTINUED: (3)

JOHN

Being with you is like following a
case history. Actresses are insane.

BETTY

(carrying the last things
out to the kitchen)

Move to Switzerland, John. I'm sure
you'd adjust like that.

She exits. John lies on his back and starts singing "The
Battle Hymn of the Republic" loudly... A moment later,
from the kitchen, Betty tries outsinging him with an even
louder "God Bless America".

CUT TO:

50 INT. NATE AND AL'S DELICATESSEN - NIGHT

John is eating alone. Very angry. A very frantic Betty
rushes in the restaurant and sees John. She rushes over
to his booth and sits across from him.

BETTY

Oh, John, I couldn't help it. It was
a call-back, John. They make ya' wait
like that. Like you're nothin'. I'm
not up there any more, John, I gotta'
take it now. Two and a half hours
they had us wait for one rotten, dumb
commercial, which I'll never get anyway,
so what's the point. John, they treat
ya' like crap, what can I do?

John remains silent, finishes eating, not looking at her.

BETTY

(continuing)

John, what was I supposed to tell them.
That I had to leave because I was
having an early dinner and a movie?
C'mon, John, ya' put up with stuff in
show business. Those little punys
think their rotten commercial's a big
deal. It's no swell, happy journey
or nothin', show business. It's the
college of hard knocks. Ah, John,
look... how late am I?

She sees clock. A surprised look comes over her face.
John is getting check and preparing to leave.

(CONTINUED)

50 CONTINUED:

BETTY
(continuing)
An hour and a half? Well, why don't
ya' just send out the mob to come lean
on me? For Chrisake I'm sorry --
what more can I do?

JOHN
(not looking at her;
as he gets up:)
Just get outa' my life.

He exits the booth, never having looked at her. She grabs
some of the rolls, puts butter inside them, sticks them
in her purse, and follows John.

CUT TO:

51 EXT. BEVERLY HILLS - WILSHIRE BOULEVARD - NIGHT

Betty and John are walking along the shopping center on
Wilshire on a very quiet night. They are in conflict.

JOHN
I don't uh... see any reason why we
should see each other anymore.

BETTY
Oh, yeah.

JOHN
I think it's pointless. I just will
not be put down by you anymore. No
more. And I promise I will stay away
this time. I'll live through the pain
of it, that's all. I won't be back
this time. Because this is craziness.
Do you know sometimes I'm mad at you
and I don't even know why. Because
you're alive... I don't know. Like
now. I hate that you're not talking
and I frankly would probably hate it
if you said anything.

BETTY
I understand.

JOHN
See what I mean?
(slight pause)
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

51 CONTINUED:

JOHN (CONT'D)

We should start seeing other people again, that's all. If we're not happy together for Chrisake, let's get apart. I'm no longer willing ... I'm just not going to be treated like one of your appointments from your Week-at-a-Glance.

BETTY

Fine.

JOHN

So let's... not call each other or see each other -- nothing. Okay?

Betty shakes her head 'yes'.

JOHN

(continuing)

Because... I've got... we've got to obviously get out of this.

BETTY

John? Look.

JOHN

At what?

BETTY

Where we are. A block from our old apartment.

CUT TO:

52 EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING IN BEVERLY HILLS - NIGHT

Betty and John stand looking up at it. They speak softly, as if in a church.

BETTY

The lights are on. People live there.

JOHN

Three years we were there. God.

BETTY

God.

(CONTINUED)

52 CONTINUED:

JOHN
What do you feel?
(pause)
Huh?

BETTY
The truth?

JOHN
Sure.

BETTY
(like "I'm sorry")
Nothin', John.

JOHN
Me neither.

He starts to laugh immediately and so does she. In fact, they roar, doubled over, stomping, eyes tearing. Someone yells for them to shut up, but they don't even hear. They're exiting, walking toward Wilshire with their arms around each other, roaring with laughter.

CUT TO:

53 INT. JOHN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

PHONE is RINGING. John wakes up, answers it.

JOHN
(very tired; waking up)
Hello.

BETTY'S VOICE
(whispering)
Oh, John, I woke you up.

JOHN
What time is it?

BETTY'S VOICE
Four in the morning. I was just --
I don't know -- having a panic. An
anxiety attack. I was wringing wet.
And so scared. I thought I was going
to die.

JOHN
You okay?

(CONTINUED)

53 CONTINUED:

Uh huh. BETTY'S VOICE

What's wrong? JOHN

I was just thinking... What if I never make it? BETTY'S VOICE

(a long pause)
All things come to him who waits. JOHN

What about the "hers"? BETTY'S VOICE

The "hers" too. JOHN

Horseshit. Goodnight, John. BETTY'S VOICE

We HEAR she hangs up. John hangs up also, sighs and then groans and tries to go to sleep.

CUT TO:

54 INT. JOHN'S OFFICE - DAY

John is working at his desk. His SECRETARY enters.

Mr. Harris? A messenger just left this. SECRETARY

She hands it to John, who half smiles at her, and exits. John opens the note.

The note reads:

John --

Was that an argument?

Betty Bird

John smiles.

CUT TO:

55 INT. STAGE - DAY

The only light on the stage is given from the bulb in the glaring worklight. RICHARD, Betty's accompanist, plays as Betty sings very well to a dark auditorium.

She finishes the song and waits self-consciously, listening to a distant murmur of VOICES whispering in the auditorium.

KLING

(his voice from
the darkness)

Wait a minute.

(then, as an after-
thought, almost
thrown away)

Good. That was good. Wait a
minute.

Betty smiles and nods. She waits. Turns to smile at Richard, then turns back and watches her shoes. She is trying not to be nervous.

KLING

Weren't you that wonderful girl
on that terrible series?

Betty nods, moving hair out of her face:

BETTY

I was Annie in "The Chorus Girls."

KLING

That's it!

(then to his unseen
companions in the
dark)

I told you that's who she was.
(to Betty)

I just want you to know my kids
were in love with you.

Betty laughs self-consciously and scratches her nose.

KLING

(continuing)

That was -- how long ago was that?

BETTY

We were on -- four years -- and
it's been, oh, ten years now since
it's been off. Except for reruns.
But I'm still the same age.

(CONTINUED)

55

CONTINUED:

Kling appears out of the darkness and walks to the apron of the stage. He wears glasses on the top of his head, but puts them on to talk to anyone at any distance. His arms are folded around his shoulders in the kind of tension that is all about him. He is maniacally energized, intense, charming and evil all at once. He laughs too loudly at her last remark and always smiles abruptly.

KLING

Well, you're just wonderful.
We want to take you out of this
terrible city back to New York.

Kling and Betty laugh.

BETTY

Terrific.

KLING

What ever happened to the other
two girls in that series?

BETTY

Oh, uh, one retired... and, uh...

She looks bothered.

KLING

Oh, the other one killed herself
or something.

Betty nods, bothered. Kling is intensely interested and
confiding now.

KLING

(continuing)

What have you been doing since
that series? And, incidentally,
you were wonderful on that ca-ca
show.

BETTY

(still shy, smiles)

Thank you.

(thinking, tries to
smile, but becomes
serious instead)

Well, I got married right after
the series, and then divorced.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

55 CONTINUED: (2)

BETTY (CONT'D)
And I... uh, then I had trouble
getting going again actually is
what happened.

KLING
(trying to remember;
seems familiar to him)
But you've worked on Broadway,
haven't you?

He squints his eyes, cocks his head to the side.

BETTY
(nodding)
For six years. The last thing I
did was the screw up girl, 'Bobo',
in "Look Boys, Girls."

RUDY'S VOICE
(from the darkness)
You were sensational.

Having looked at the voice, Kling's glasses go up again.

KLING
There! Our bookwriter says you
were a triumph.

BETTY
(being cute)
Ho-hum, another triumph.

She and Kling laugh... He turns to the darkness to include them.

KLING
Now you can read for us tomorrow.
And on...
(checking his clipboard)
Thursday dance? Do you dance?

BETTY
Me? Uh, yes.

KLING
You taking class?

BETTY
("this-way-that-way"
sign with her hand)
On and off. But I dance.

(CONTINUED)

55 CONTINUED: (3)

She nods her head, assuring him.

KLING
(yells into the wings)
Fred! Fred!
(to Betty)
We'll have you work with Mitchell,
the choreographer...
(turns, halfway facing
the dark auditorium)
Is Mitch back yet?

KATE'S VOICE
(from the dark)
Not yet.

KLING
(holding his head
the same way,
suddenly furious)
Kate, that is your fault! He
should be here! Christ!
(to Betty, smiling
a 'pay no attention'
smile)
Now this is a wonderful part.
It's you, so don't do anything.
It's the second lead, the comedy
part, we need a big voice, name
is 'Evelyn', and what the hell,
it's the best part in the whole
goddam show is what it is. How
old are you?

BETTY
Uh -- I play between twenty-eight
and thirty-eight -- generally.

KLING
(yells)
Fred!

Fred appears now.

KLING
(continuing)
What the hell were you doing?
(laughs, turns to
the people in the
dark)
What the hell does he do back there?

(CONTINUED)

55 CONTINUED: (4)

Fred goes to explain and Kling stops him.

KLING
(continuing)
Please! Give her Evelyn's big
number, mark her in to read
tomorrow, give her a script,
and get your ass the hell off
the stage.

Fred exits and Kling turns to the darkness, furious again.

KLING
(continuing)
If he can't handle it back stage,
for chrissake, somebody get back
there with him!
(to Betty; he sighs,
then abruptly smiles
again)
You're just swell.

He starts to retreat to the dark, then comes even more forward and almost whispers confidentially:

KLING
(continuing)
You're very right. Very right.

Kling exits in the dark and Betty looks back at her accompanist, and together they exit to the wings and wait while Fred returns on stage and introduces a male singer. Betty sees a female friend, TERRY, standing with an accompanist and sheet music, waiting to sing, and they have a huge embrace and whispered greetings. Fred returns as the singer has begun and gives Betty a time to return and a script. Then Betty and Richard slide the huge door and exit. From her exit spot, we HEAR Betty scream and laugh. Fred rushes over, slides back the door revealing Betty with her arms around Richard in ecstasy, and yells "Shhhhh". Betty nods and grabs Richard's hand and they are exiting as Fred slides the heavy door back in place.

56 INT. STAGE - DAY

Same worklight. Same dark auditorium. Betty, facing front, reads with Fred, whose back is to the audience... both hold scripts. They are in the middle of the reading.

(CONTINUED)

56 CONTINUED:

FRED
(reading)
"But you're women!"

BETTY
(reading)
"Judy and I aren't just women, Buddy. We're people. So please don't act so surprised when we know what we're doing. Because we two women are going to make this business work."

FRED
(reading)
"You've joined those women, haven't you? I say women that want their rights ought to get a couple lefts."

BETTY
(reading)
"Wait a minute, Buddy. I haven't joined anything yet. But to label is to libel. I don't know if I'm really for Women's Lib.
(then very smug and defensive)
Frankly, I would hate to see women lose their natural superiority!"

Betty and Fred laugh and Fred turns around, facing the auditorium, shielding his eyes with his palm, waiting for instructions from the dark.

BETTY
This scene is just... the best.
It's me. It's darling.

Waiting, she looks down at the scene, her head shaking.

KLING
(emerging from the dark, out of whispers)
Swell. Just swell is what that was.
(turns, looking at the dark)
Right, gang?

Approvals from the dark.

(CONTINUED)

56 CONTINUED: (2)

KLING
You know what? You're good.

Betty beams, but modestly.

CUT TO:

57 INT. STAGE - DAY

Same worklight. Same dark auditorium. Betty, in a leotard, is dancing with Mitchell. They do combinations, rhythms, and routines. She is, indeed, a good dancer.

Fred stands watching in the wings. As do the singer (male) from the last audition and Terry (female), both waiting to dance.

Betty and Mitch finish and there is applause from Kling as he emerges from the dark.

CUT TO:

58 INT. STAGE - DAY

Same worklight. Same dark auditorium. Betty is at her second reading, in a new outfit, and is in the middle of a scene with Fred.

CUT TO:

59 INT. JOHN'S CAR - DAY

Betty drives up to John's office building in his car. John is waiting. John gets in the driver's seat and Betty moves over to the other seat.

BETTY
Oh, John, you saved my life with this car. I could brain that woman getting me into that accident this morning.

JOHN
Do I get a kiss?

He leans over and kisses her.

BETTY
John, the hot news flash is that it's very close.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

59 CONTINUED:

BETTY (CONT'D)
So close we shouldn't even talk
about it. But I think I'm going
to get it. Don't say a word.
Let's talk about something else.
How are you?

JOHN
You'd go to New York?

BETTY
(suddenly realizes
he is bothered)
That's where the play would be,
John.

Upset, John puts the car in gear and they drive off.

CUT TO:

60 INT. STAGE - DAY

Same set-up. Betty, in a third outfit, reads with Fred.

CUT TO:

61 INT. RICHARD'S HOME - EARLY EVENING

Richard is at his piano, which is covered with inscribed pictures of performers. Betty is rehearsing and learning the new song. It is amusing in that she smokes nervously while singing, and finds piano parts and small waits to hurriedly take a drag. She works almost too hard.

CUT TO:

62 INT. STAGE - DAY

Same set-up. Betty is in the middle of the belting number we've heard her rehearsing. She does well. When she finishes, Kling comes forward.

KLING
(smiling)
Oh boy, huh? Just fine. Great.
What can I say. Listen, thank
you for coming in all these times.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

62 CONTINUED:

KLING (CONT'D)

The only thing I can tell you is you'll know today a little later, around six or so, as soon as we hear everybody and get a chance to talk. We, thank Christ, go back to New York tomorrow.

BETTY

(leaning down and
shaking his hand)
I hope it works out.

KLING

So do I. You're just wonderful.

BETTY

Your show is wonderful. Thank you.

(smiles big, waves
to the dark auditorium)

Thank you.

Kling exits back into the darkness as Betty exits into the wings to phone John. Fred passes her with Terry, who is going out to sing. Richard waits in the wings, watching the next audition. Betty finds her large purse and looks for a dime. Finds one. Goes to the phone in the corner and dials. Behind all this, we are being made increasingly aware of a truly remarkable VOICE singing the same song Betty just finished. Betty speaks in a whisper.

BETTY

Sandra? It's Betty. Oh, I'm fantastic. Uh-huh. Listen, Sandra, I can't talk right now. Is John there? Okay. Thanks, Sandra.

Betty waits. Suddenly her attention goes to Terry singing that song. The voice on the other end of the phone obviously interrupts her.

BETTY

(continuing)

John. Listen, I'll call you when I get home.

He is talking and she is getting apparently nervous.

(CONTINUED)

62

CONTINUED: (2)

BETTY

(continuing)

When? I'll call you after court then, okay? It went all right. I don't know. John, listen, I have to go. Yeah. I've got that photographer coming, so no. Listen, I have to hang up. Okay, goodbye.

Betty picks up her purse and crosses to the wings where Fred and Richard are watching Terry sing. She stands behind Fred and listens. Terry is just thrilling, vocally.

CUT TO:

63

INT. BETTY'S APARTMENT - EARLY EVENING

John is in the kitchen doing some paper work as Betty rushes in through the front door, nervous, talking rapidly, chewing her cud. She puts her large purse down on a stand and removing her scarf and shoes while looking through the mail, all the time talking to an unseen John.

She gets to the phone and we HEAR the WHIRR of the answering service machine as she puts it on playback. She stops the machine suddenly, and hurries across the room to get a pencil and paper and her appointment book from her purse. Then turns the machine on again. All this in continuous motion.

BETTY

Where are you, John? I knew you were here. I saw your car.

JOHN'S VOICE

I'm in the kitchen.

BETTY

Well, I have never been more depressed in my life. This girl I know, Terry, sang for the part and well, cut, print, incredible. I was suicidal. But I just came from Richard's and we talked about it. First of all, she's too young for the part, and Richard heard her reading and said she's the worst actress in the world.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BETTY (CONT'D)

And I know her, she copies me,
and she's about as funny as
World War Two. Plus zilch in
the looks department.

JOHN'S VOICE

Are you interested in the fact
that this case I'm in court on
has enough capital and potential
involved that I could possibly
never have to work again?

BETTY

(not really listening)
Terrific. Oh, and do you want
to hear something really interesting?
Tim Cory got a commercial. Wait...

BETTY'S VOICE

(as the answering
service machine starts)
Hi. This is Betty Bird. I'm out
now. I have a job today so...

JOHN'S VOICE

(calling from the
kitchen)
What job?

BETTY

(as the recording
plays behind her)
Quiet, John. You never know who'll
call.

BETTY'S VOICE

... when you hear the beep, please
leave your name and number and you
can talk as long as you want. This
isn't one of the timed kind, so you
can leave as long a message as you
want. Or just your name and number.
Uh, okay. I have to go the bathroom
so go ahead.

BEEP SOUND. John comes in the room.

JOHN

Jesus. Can't you just leave your
message?

(CONTINUED)

63 CONTINUED: (2)

BETTY

Oh, John, you're such a pill.
People'll laugh at that. Let's
be quiet, they might have called.

LANA'S VOICE

Betty, darling, it's Lana. Are
you listening in? You're probably
listening. I called to see if you
got that show... and say mazeltov.
They liked the story at TV Guide
and I'm talking them into a picture
story. Think of all the favors you
owe me? Call me. I hate these
things -- it's like talking to
yourself. Go meshugginah. Oh.
You said you got a job. Great.
That's great. Or is it a lie?

CLICK, as she hangs up saying "Darleen, get me the number
of..."

JOHN

See.

BETTY

Some favor. A client of hers
couldn't do it. Uh, so what.

CLICK.

BETTY

(continuing)

Someone hung up. Thanks.

CLICK.

BETTY

(continuing)

Another one.

(talks to the machine
as though it were
alive)

Why d'ya hang up? Why do you think
I bought the thing?

JOHN

I bought it.

BETTY

Why d'ya think he bought the thing?

(CONTINUED)

63 CONTINUED: (3)

JIM'S VOICE

(laughing)

The bathroom, huh? That's funny.

Betty makes a face at John.

JIM'S VOICE

(continuing)

Hey! I got the show. They just called. And I was wondering about you -- let's fly to New York together.

Betty begins talking over this right after she hears he got the show.

BETTY

(upset)

He got it.

(upset; to John)

He got it.

JOHN

Now I won't believe that you were up for the same part.

JIM'S VOICE

I'm home, so call me as soon as you hear. I'm hoping for you. I'm sure you got it though.

CLICK as he hangs up.

BETTY

(talking through

Jim's message)

You've got to button up, John. This is all very important. The most important day of my life, so please. And he got it, that twerp. Well, I'm glad for him.

She sits, dejected.

SANDRA'S VOICE

Miss Bird? This is Sandra at Mr. Harris' office. I'm sorry. Wait a sec.

CLICK.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

BETTY

Oh, please, John, you cannot tie
up the only phone I have in the
world with your calls, I'm sorry.

CLICK.

SANDRA'S VOICE

I'm sorry, Miss Bird. I'm back.

BETTY

(to the machine)

Get off the phone!

SANDRA'S VOICE

Your phone has been out of order.
There was a call here for you
from a Mr. Lester Wolsk.

BETTY

(interrupting)

My agent. That means they called.

SANDRA'S VOICE

(continuing;
uninterrupted)

He said your phone is out of order
and he is trying to reach you,
so would you call him.

BETTY

(speaking over Sandra)

Oh, my God. My phone was out of
order. Oh, Jesus!

SANDRA'S VOICE

He said you have the number. Your
phone seems to be working
satisfactorally now, Miss Bird.

CLICK.

BETTY

I should call Lester. I'll finish
the messages, then I'll call him.
I could kill that rotten phone
company.

JOHN'S VOICE

(whispering and sexy)

Hello, I'd like to speak to Betty
the bird.

(CONTINUED)

63 CONTINUED: (5)

VOICE ahs and groans and pants like a dirty phone call.

BETTY
Oh, John, you're doing that again.
That is probably why my agent
couldn't reach me!

JOHN
I hope you don't think that that
is me.

JOHN'S VOICE
I'd like to have you here right
now, naked, lying here with
nothing on, and then I'd sneak
in and take all my clothes off
and then I'd take a feather and --

VOICE makes noises again.

BETTY
Oh, John, that is so sick. What
if a friend was here? Or my
landlady dropped in. Or some nun
came by?

JOHN
(snapping his fingers)
I always forget.

JOHN'S VOICE
Oh, God, you're so good. Oh.
Oh, my God. You're just great,
baby. Help. Help. Ohhhh.

CLICK.

BETTY
That is so loathesome, John, I
can't discuss it. I'll kill
myself if someone in your office
catches you doing that some day
and thinks I'm sitting home
enjoying it. And anyway, someone
is tapping my phone.

JOHN
Who?

BETTY
How do I know?
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

63 CONTINUED: (6)

BETTY (CONT'D)
Whoever's tapping everybody's
phone. God. Should I stop the
tape and call Lester or wait and
see if they called?

JOHN'S VOICE
Hi, baby. It's me again -- just
calling to say --

And the MOANS, GROANS and HEAVY BREATHING begin again.

BETTY
(almost crying)
I'm going to just throw myself
from a roof.

JOHN
Why are you so upset? It's just
a call from a fan.

BETTY
John, now you can't do that anymore.
I could be losing this show, as
well as thousands of jobs. My own
agent can't reach me, the producer
can't reach me, and if they ever
took out my phone because of
lewdness, I'd never speak to you
again. I can't afford to get
busted, John.

JOHN'S VOICE
Oh, am I glad I came back, baby.
I'm taking my feather now and --
ahhhhh -- goodbye.

CLICK.

BETTY
(interrupting)
Oh, God. You and that feather.
If that's the worse thing you can
think of! It's nothing. That is
nothing.

JOHN
What is something?

BETTY
Whips, boots, swapping, raincoats,
how would I know?

(CONTINUED)

63 CONTINUED: (7)

Raincoats? JOHN

CLICK.

BETTY
(getting hysterical)
Now see. Somebody else hung up!

JOHN
Well, it wasn't my fault.

BETTY
Well, it wasn't mine! Is that
the last message?

JOHN
(at the machine)
How can you tell?

BETTY
It stops. The tape.

JOHN
It's running.

CLICK.

BETTY
Somebody else hung up. What kind
of gift was that, John. There
must have been fourteen people
hanging up. What the hell do
they think I've got the thing for.
Christ. I bet that at least two
of those were jobs or auditions.
I bet anything.

JOHN
Now it's stopped.

BETTY
Well, then shut it off, will ya.
Good, John.

As he does shut it off, Betty comes to the phone. She
is trembling so much, she mis-dials twice. Almost in-
articulate, she mutters:

BETTY
Good. Okay. Let's see now. Oh.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (8)

BETTY (CONT'D)

Look at my hands. They must have called Lester. Look.

(waits as phone rings;
relaxing jaw, up and
down)

Hello, Lester? Betty Bird. What was wrong with my phone? No, I wasn't on it, I wasn't even home. It was just busy.

(she punches John
in the shoulder)

What about the show? Uh-huh. Oh, good. Well, I did sing okay, Lester. The readings, you know, were really the best though. Oh, they did. Good, because look how long since I was on a stage -- fifteen years. What I could do now with the prestige of just one good show. Yeah. Yeah. Well, Lester, what did they say? Because Jim Margolin got it and he didn't even get to read three times. What different type? Who? Exactly what did he say, Lester? Did he say who? Well, she's just like me, Lester. Well, she's not a different type, I'm sorry. In fact, she looks just like me... if I looked more like a lesbian. All she's got is that voice. Yeah. Well, that's the business, huh? I really thought they liked me. Yeah, well, they didn't hire me. Okay, Lester. Yeah.

(hangs up; fighting
tears and anger)

Rotten agent. God, he's a rotten agent. They told him they're using a different type and they're going to use this big dyke who copies me all over the place. The one I told you. See, Lester can't negotiate. He's got no muscle. I need an agent who can say 'you want him, then use her', you know? Boy, those dykes get everything. Brother, if that isn't a son of a bitch. Her for the comedy lead.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

63 CONTINUED: (9)

BETTY (CONT'D)
I can't even laugh at her. I mean, to me, she has no comedy technique at all. No timing, nothing. Faces, like this, she makes... I mean, that's her idea of comedy. Call her sometime with your feather and she'd pull your jaw right out of your face.

JOHN
(going to hold her)
I'm sorry. I know it meant a lot.

Betty is crying now. And trying to stop it. And keeping away from John.

BETTY
It meant everything. I can't get arrested. Ah, John, I was so close... I was so right for it. I prayed so hard for that skunky part.

JOHN
C'mere.

BETTY
(darting away)
No, John, don't touch me. I don't want sympathy or I'll keep on crying, and I can't.

JOHN
Just cry!

BETTY
I can't! The photographer is coming!

JOHN
What?

Betty has been getting clothes out, dresses, shoes, etc.

BETTY
For that crappy little story in TV Guide. It's the dinkiest story, it's about an inch... this big.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

63 CONTINUED: (10)

BETTY (CONT'D)
I'm sorry I don't have a dress
small enough to stay in proportion
to the story.

She is having trouble unzipping the dress she is wearing.

JOHN
After the pictures, can we talk?
Would you like to go out to dinner?

BETTY
Thanks anyway, John. But I want
to really get skinny now -- like
the dyke. Those lesbos really
keep in shape.

JOHN
It would be good for you. Let's
plan to go out.

BETTY
The older I get, the more I believe
no one should ever go out. Not at
all.

JOHN
I have something I want to say.
Why won't you have dinner with me?

BETTY
(in her slip; pinning
up her hair on top
of her head)
Because I do not eat. Ever. I
never eat, John. I get shots,
take diet-pills, dehydration pills,
and twice a week I go all the way
to the rotten San Fernando Valley
to get fat pounded off me. All I
eat is Fresca. That's all any
girl needs. I don't have time to
eat like you, John. It's a tough
world keeping up with the dykes.

JOHN
Is she a terrible girl? The girl
that got the part?

BETTY
She's a wonderful girl.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

63 CONTINUED: (11)

BETTY (CONT'D)
And a very close friend of mine.
Very close, very wonderful girl,
a sensational voice. She just
happens to have turned out a bull
dyke.

A pause.

JOHN
Could you sit down with me before
he gets here?

BETTY
(suspicious)
I don't think so.

JOHN
Would you rather wait until he
leaves?

BETTY
Huh?

JOHN
I brought you something. In case
you got the show. Or in case you
didn't get the show.

From out of his pocket, he takes a ring box and tries
to hand it to her... but she won't take it.

BETTY
I don't want it, John. Take it
back. Thanks. I bet it's nice.
Thanks anyway.

John puts the box in her hands.

JOHN
Open it.

BETTY
If I open it, will you take it
back?

JOHN
Open it.

BETTY
(sighs, opening it)
I hope it's earrings.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

63 CONTINUED: (12)

BETTY (CONT'D)
Poison earrings. Some day...
Whew... this is some day. I just --
(it is a ring)
John.

JOHN
Marry me. I want you here.

She shakes her head "no".

JOHN
(continuing)
What I realize is I need you.
I wouldn't have let you go away
anyway.

Betty starts to cry. She walks around, trying to stop
it, breathing hard.

JOHN
(continuing)
Now wait a minute. Is that yes
or no?

Betty starts bringing clothes out to make choices for
the pictures.

JOHN
(continuing)
I really love you. I need you.

Betty shakes her head no, still crying, and goes back
into the bedroom.

BETTY
(her head coming around
the bedroom door)
John, I lost the show, which is
enough, and now I'm losing my mind.
I don't want to be married. That
was then, ya know. Now I don't.
I want -- all I want is to work.
And, John, guys that want to be
married don't hang around with
girls like me... who don't.

JOHN
I'll marry you tonight. I'll
marry you tomorrow. I'll marry
you whenever you say.

(CONTINUED)

63 CONTINUED: (13)

Betty starts crying all over again and her head disappears back into the bedroom. At this moment, the photographer, WALT MCNALLY, who is black, appears at the screen door. John lets him in.

WALT
I'm the photographer.

He speaks quietly, hearing the crying.

JOHN
(quietly also)
My name is John. Come on in.

Slight pause while they listen to Betty cry.

JOHN
(continuing)
Ah -- every -- everything will
be fine.

From the bedroom, as clothes come flying out into the living room:

BETTY
I wish I could go back to my sleep
period -- those were the days.
Look at my eyes. John, why tonight --

She enters in her slip and doesn't see the photographer, who is to the opposite side of the bedroom door. Carrying more dresses and still crying:

BETTY
(continuing)
Are you doing this like a favor
or something? After all these --

She follows John's gaze and sees Walt and screams, just standing there, not moving. A second later, she runs behind the console TV to conceal herself.

WALT
(flatly, not reacting)
I'm the photographer.

BETTY
Oh. Would, uh -- would -- would
you hand me that dress there? Not
you. I'm sorry. John, please?
No. That one. Yes. Thanks.

(CONTINUED)

63 CONTINUED: (14)

John hands her the dress, smiles weakly at the photographer and sits. Betty is getting into the dress in that tight space and trying to be gracious, looking over the top of the set when she remembers to.

BETTY
Who let you in?

WALT
John.

BETTY
Oh. Do you know John?

WALT
He said, 'Come in. My name is John.'

BETTY
Well, it is. I mean, he's that way. I mean, you're like that, John. He's... uh, how long were you standing there?

WALT
From when the clothes all started comin' out that door there.

JOHN
It was hardly -- it wasn't even a minute. Uh --

BETTY
I wish that you would have said something. I don't mean... oh, I don't know what I mean. We're all very peculiar today. I lost a very important show and then... uh, nothing. Oh, John is my, uh, friend.

WALT
Okay.

BETTY
It's just that he just -- oh, well, it's really -- could, uh -- let's just... move ahead.

(CONTINUED)

63 CONTINUED: (15)

Walt has been working with his cameras and other equipment, now turns on more lights and opens curtains and shutters.

Betty, in a dress now, comes from behind the TV and begins picking up the dresses. John helps. Betty gives Walt a large smile in the midst of this and, in doing so, walks into the chair holding the dresses draped over the back, knocking it over and all the dresses on the floor again. They pick them up, placing them over the seat of the chair. Then, unwittingly, Betty and John both go to sit down in the same chair. Both rise quickly, embarrassed, and stand, smiling, self-consciously at Walt.

BETTY

I've heard too much about you.
I mean, so much. From Lana. I
was telling John -- I'm so nervous
today -- no, I don't mean I was
telling him that... I was saying
what wonderful work you do. And
I am very nervous because of --
something.

WALT

S'okay. Nice to meet you both.

BETTY

Is it really?

Hearing herself, she moves away and takes the back two rollers out of her hair and brushes it.

BETTY

(continuing)

I didn't... that... I was thinking
about something important. I, uh,
I didn't mean that either. You've,
uh... met John, and my name is
Betty. From Elizabeth Ruth
actually. I never tell my real
name like that.

WALT

I'm Walt McNally.

BETTY

McNally! Then you must be Irish.

(she hears herself)

Oh, my God. Please don't think
I'm totally crazy. But I am.

(CONTINUED)

63 CONTINUED: (16)

WALT
That's okay. A lot of people
take me for Irish.

BETTY
Are you Irish?

She realizes she is being ridiculous and gets involved in
looking through the dresses.

JOHN
I'll wait... uh, in the kitchen.
I brought a lot of work.

Betty and John lock eyes.

JOHN
(continuing)
We can talk later, okay?

Betty goes back to the dresses. John hesitates, half-
smiles at Walt, and goes into the kitchen.

BETTY
(picking up dresses
for Walt to make a
choice)
Listen, what about this stuff?

WALT
For what?

BETTY
Well, to wear.

WALT
You gonna wear all that?

BETTY
Well, some of it.

WALT
Whatever you want.

BETTY
I don't want them all taken in
this.

WALT
Okay.

(CONTINUED)

63 CONTINUED: (17)

BETTY
Do you want to look at them?

WALT
(holding up a light
meter)
Why don't you stand over here for
a second.

BETTY
(crossing, holding
all the dresses)
Don't take any, though.

WALT
Will you stand against this window?

BETTY
Don't take any pictures, okay?

WALT
(looking through
camera)
Put your face sort of three quarters
toward me.

BETTY
I gotta comb my hair before you
take any.

WALT
(looking through
camera)
What?

BETTY
I just gotta comb my hair.

SNAP, as Walt shoots a picture.

BETTY
(continuing)
What did you do?

SNAP.

BETTY
(continuing)
You didn't take any?

WALT
Look straight at me.

(CONTINUED)

63 CONTINUED: (18)

BETTY
Listen, don't take any.

SNAP.

BETTY
(continuing)
Walt, whatever your name is, will
ya wait a minute.

SNAP.

BETTY
(continuing)
Walt!

SNAP.

BETTY
(continuing)
Now stop it!

SNAP.

BETTY
(continuing)
Goddam it, stop it!

WALT
(looks up at her)
What's happenin'?

BETTY
Well, I would like to put the
clothes down in the first place.
(she does)
Now don't take any. Now wait.
Now just one minute. One single
minute.
(brushing her hair)
There's no point in taking pictures
if they're going to turn out crappy.
What good would a lot of crappy
pictures be? I don't mean to sound
like a... a... a...

WALT
(helping out)
Bitch?

BETTY
Yes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (19)

WALT
Are you ready?

BETTY
Uh, do you think I should change
now -- or wear this -- or what?

WALT
C'mon, let's go.

BETTY
I'm asking you a civilized question
and I would like a civilized answer.
I mean, these pictures could mean
a lot to me.

WALT
What do you want?

BETTY
I want some help. Just a little
bit of help, please. I don't want
a bunch of screwed up photographs.

WALT
Man.

BETTY
I just don't want to waste our time.
Do I look all right?

WALT
Yes.

BETTY
Does that mean yes or no or what?

WALT
Stand back here now.

BETTY
I mean, I just want to know, for
god's sake.

WALT
Good. That's good there. Good light.

BETTY
Okay.

She wets her lips and smiles a big smile and holds and
holds it. She drops it to speak.

(CONTINUED)

63 CONTINUED: (20)

BETTY
(continuing)
I can't hold it for--

SNAP.

BETTY
(continuing)
Wait.

SNAP.

BETTY
(continuing)
Wait till I'm read--

SNAP.

BETTY
(continuing)
If you don't wait, I'm going to
punch you right in the face.
(she has crossed over
to him and stands
very close)
Now cut it. Just cut it. I want
one picture like this...
(she does the fake
smile)
... and one like this...

She sucks in her cheeks and strikes a dramatic pose.

WALT
What is that? Are you ripped?

BETTY
No, you're the one who's ripped.
What is it with this day! Listen,
I'm thirty-seven years old. I
know what they look for when they
look at pictures.

WALT
Tell me, what you want?

BETTY
I want a good, eight by ten, black
and white glossy, one smiling like
this...

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

63 CONTINUED: (21)

BETTY (CONT'D)
(she demonstrates)
... and one like this...

She demonstrates the dramatic pose.

WALT
You're stoned, huh?

BETTY
It's my sixty-five bucks and that's
what I want. Please, I've been an
actress since I was seventeen...
that's twenty years!

WALT
So?

BETTY
And I'm in a slump. I'm in a bad
slump in my career. Listen, I'll
tell ya... I can't get a goddam job.

WALT
That's the way it goes sometimes.

BETTY
Oh really. You know all about it,
huh?

WALT
C'mon, let's get going.

BETTY
I just don't have a lot of sixty-five
dollarses to toss around. I don't
need experiment U.S.A.

WALT
You know what you look like?

BETTY
Yes, I know. The goddam hairdresser
did my hair the way he does his own.

WALT
You look like a thirty-seven-year-
old actress.

BETTY
What's that supposed to mean?

(CONTINUED)

63 CONTINUED: (22)

WALT

That you look like an actress who
is thirty-seven years old.

BETTY

Yeah.

WALT

Trust me, will you? I'll take them
all over again if you don't like
them. But trust me.

BETTY

I do trust you. Honest to God.
Lana said you're incredible. I just
want you to understand what I want.

WALT

Hey, listen. These are free... okay?
All these pictures free. Just let
me do it... my way. Okay?

BETTY

Free?

WALT

Free.

BETTY

Okay. Could I just say one thing,
though? See, I have a very crooked
smile. If I didn't hide it, I'd
smile like this.

(she demonstrates)

So I have to... you know, uh...
compensate by doing this when I smile.

(she demonstrates)

See what I mean?

WALT

Yeah.

BETTY

Well, that's what I mean.

WALT

Okay. Wait one second. I knew
that. Everybody that looks at you
knows that. You look like that.
That is the way you look.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

63 CONTINUED: (23)

WALT (CONT'D)

You wear that make-up, you dye your hair, you got capped teeth, you're nervous. Every motherless person that looks at you sees that. That is the way you look.

BETTY

Why don't we just forget it.

WALT

Because that's beautiful. It's a person. It's a wonderful thing. Now get comfortable and I'm going to shoot.

BETTY

Listen, could I make something clear...

WALT

If you don't like these, I'll pose you until your ass falls off.

BETTY

If, uh... if I, uh... oh God.

WALT

I like you. Okay? Now trust me. Will you?

BETTY

(nods head)

The only thing is -- oh, shit. Oh, I'm... excuse me. I hate when women swear -- in front of strangers anyway. I don't do that. Plus you said 'bitch' before and 'ass' so what is 'shit'? Oh, if I say one more stupid thing...

WALT

That's good. Why don't you talk?

BETTY

What?

WALT

I want you to talk.

BETTY

What have I been doing here? What d'ya mean?

(CONTINUED)

63 CONTINUED: (24)

WALT
Let's get out of here.
(picks up his coat
and starts getting
his equipment together)
C'mon. Get your stuff.

Getting her dresses and sticking her brush and make-up in
her large bag:

BETTY
What are we doing now?

WALT
We're going to go outside and you're
just going to talk and talk and talk.
Or you can sing or dance or laugh or
cry and I'm not going to say one word.
So don't ask me any questions because
I won't answer. Hurry up.

He's out the front door.

BETTY
(hurries after,
yelling to John)
John! I don't know where I'm going
but I'll be back.

With her arms loaded, she runs out the door after Walt.
John comes out of the kitchen, sleeves rolled up, papers
in hand, glasses, and looks to see what happened.

CUT TO:

64 EXT. HOLLYWOOD AND VINE - EARLY EVENING

THROUGHOUT all these SCENES, Betty talks (or laughs, cries,
clowns, reflects, whatever) and Walt just photographs her
... He does not get involved. She has a change of clothes,
and some adjustment of hair, for each new sequence. As
the sequences progress and she relaxes, she becomes more
and more open and real and deeply sensible.

BETTY
(talking in an almost
hushed tone)
This is embarrassing. I don't have
anything to say. Whew.
(a pause)
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

64 CONTINUED:

BETTY (CONT'D)
 Just... talk, right?
 (shakes her head to
 clear her thoughts)
 See, you don't know, I guess, that
 today... well, everything in my
 life just... oh, I don't have
 anything to talk about. Nothing.
 (suddenly smiling and
 leaning in to him)
 Just let me say this...

She laughs.

CUT TO:

65 EXT. HOLLYWOOD SIGN IN THE HILLS - EARLY EVENING

BETTY
 (making an effort)
 See, this isn't the way I planned it.
 What I wanted... well, you know. I
 have never had a picture taken so, I
 mean let's be frank, oddly before.
 And I don't mean to be rude. The
 opposite. It's very difficult just
 to talk. You know? Is this right
 though? What I'm doing? Huh?
 (after all these,
 no responses)
 The heck you say.
 (she thinks, looking
 away for a moment;
 innocently)
 I wanted -- I wanted to look pretty.
 I mean, when you're thirty-seven,
 you can use a good picture. I --
 wanted to be a beaut, not an ug. I
 can see them at TV Guide now with
 the puny little story and the ugly
 picture. Or in casting offices...
 'let's use her'... 'which one?'...
 'the ugly one'.

CUT TO:

66 EXT. MACARTHUR PARK AT THE LAKE - EARLY EVENING

BETTY
 Talk about your senses of humor.
 (MORE)

(CONTINUED)

66 CONTINUED:

BETTY (CONT'D)
Whew. Who died, pal? I bet they have to give you gas to make you smile. Oh, I sure want that one you just took of me with my hand in front of my face. Terrific. Maybe we'll get two out of eleven hundred. What a life. I'd take drugs... if I knew what they were.

CUT TO:

67 EXT. MUSIC CENTER IN DOWNTOWN L.A. - EARLY EVENING

BETTY
You're lucky you don't have John. He says two sentences a year. But people think quiet people are very, you know, deep, or intelligent, or sexy. Actually, what they are is quiet. Still waters run crazy. I have never had that problem myself.
(pause)

And I never... I could never understand what he... what he saw in me.

CUT TO:

68 EXT. DOWNTOWN L.A. MAIN STREET - EARLY EVENING

BETTY
See, it's getting like New York here. What here? Everywhere. It used to be gentle... listen, so did I. You can take the girl out of New York... I think everybody ought to start out in New York, though -- no matter what you do. Live with the killers. Get toughened up. I worked hard -- all my life. I think if it hadn't been for guys, I would have been a star. I mean, I paid my dues. Paid 'em -- Christ, I'm bankrupt. And a lot of it's luck, you know? And me, if I have any luck at all, it's bad. You should have taken that one, had a very interesting expression. In fact, let's face it, you've blown a couple'a beauts.

CUT TO:

69 EXT. FREEWAY OVER-RAMP - EARLY EVENING

BETTY

Look at all those cars. That's like the inside of my head. Little artsy shot here, huh?

(pause)

I lost a show today that... that would have changed my whole life. See, in my business your whole life can be changed in one job. Listen, that's why we stick. I don't know why, though... I got this feeling... I feel that was my last chance.

(then forcing clowning)

What about going back to my place and get some of me in the kitchen with my spode? Or eating my curds and whey. Or me with my head in the oven. Or turn on the burners and get the old Joan of Arc shot.

(a pause)

I should have got that show.

CUT TO:

70 EXT. CENTURY CITY (ROOF OF A BUILDING) - EARLY EVENING

BETTY

Look. There is no Los Angeles. Like me. We're both scattered all over the place.

(looks at Walt, laughs)

See, I don't know anymore why I'm even alive. What's the point? I mean, why am I alive? And don't tell me people have been asking that for centuries. I want to know by six o'clock tonight.

CUT TO:

71 EXT. BEACH - EARLY EVENING

BETTY

(walking along the beach)

You know, Walt, what it is? What I think? I think it's ever since the President was killed when the whole country got all screwed up. And then all those other shootings and killings and we're all walking around scared now.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

71 CONTINUED:

BETTY (CONT'D)

We're all -- afraid now. He got us all excited and then some guy just killed him, and nobody knew what to do with all that he stirred up inside. And it all started going every which way. Trying to find the sense, we were. And what is really so lousy is that we should be scared. Did you know that he was the only President never to take a salary? God, can we ever get over that? Never. That's something to live with. That's something.

CUT TO:

72 EXT. COURTYARD OF BETTY'S BUILDING - EARLY EVENING

BETTY

And everybody knows just where they were that day. Every single person. I went out shopping. I was just divorced then. The whole department store just stopped, and we all stood listening to this little kid's radio. It cut into me like -- everybody I loved had just been killed. I never cried like that. Oh, God, huh? I just sat and watched the TV for three days. Nobody could do anything. We all knew what we lost. I never felt so alone. So scared and lonely. But it's like John says, you gotta look at the good side, though -- I mean, we were lucky to have him at all. I can't talk anymore.

CUT TO:

73 INT. BETTY'S APARTMENT - EVENING

Walt is putting his things away. John stands there looking put-out at how long they've been. Betty holds the clothes.

BETTY

(half-smiling)

Sorry we took so long, John. I wish you could have been there. What a look. He's terrific.

(a pause)

Walt. John and I are getting married.

CUT TO:

74 INT. BETTY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

John enters. Betty hurries into the room all dressed to go out, finishing spraying her hair with a can of hair-spray... her hair is over-done.

BETTY
Look at my hair, if ya wanna see somethin', John. I look like I'm going out to demonstrate a couple Spanish stunts.

JOHN
How are ya, kid?

BETTY
Look at you. Hubba-hubba.

JOHN
Oh, I just look like a guy who's adjusted to getting married, that's all.

BETTY
Please readjust then, John. I hear hair spray causes cancer. I hope so. I'm wearing the ring on my right hand, John. Better to tell you than walk around wearing gloves the rest of my life. It's wrong, John. It's all wrong. It's better to be miserable alone than miserable with you. Oh, John, I don't wanna settle down. I want the opposite. Let's hurry. C'mon. Or we'll fight.
(almost in anguish,
she is so sorry)
John, I can't help it.

John is very upset. She has exited. He crosses to the door and follows her, closing the door.

CUT TO:

75 INT. JOHN'S CAR - NIGHT

Driving on the freeway. In silence. Both Betty and John are openly upset. Finally, Betty takes the ring off and puts it in John's pocket. She rubs his arm and takes her hand away.

BETTY
There, John.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

75 CONTINUED:

BETTY (CONT'D)

(slight pause)

And thank you, wow. But John, it could have been worse. I could have married you.

(slight pause; she

touches his arm,

speaking quietly)

I'm sorry, John. I got scared and said 'yes'.

(then forcing herself

to be very happy)

Why don't I sing a song. Okay?

Uh... oh... okay.

She begins to sing. John stops her by pulling the car over in the center safety lane and puts the car in 'park'. Cars are whizzing by on both sides of them. He turns to her, very angry, emphatic and definite.

JOHN

Why are you never, never yourself? Life isn't a movie. For chrissake, why can't you just be? Why does everything have to be songs or one-liners or exit lines or your whole running around this city to look like you're doing something. You're doing nothing! You're finished, you're over, you're through! Jesus, what does it take to get that into your head? Listen... it's a chance now to have something real, to be real, get married, have a home, some sense to it all --

BETTY

(trying to be brave)

See, John, women in my business don't last. And they forget you in a second. I gotta stay in there or --

JOHN

(interrupting; shouting)

You're a failure! A flop! Nobody wants you! Jesus Christ, when will you understand? And all your freak loser friends. They're all -- you know what they are? They're bums! For chrissake, why don't they all go get jobs!

(CONTINUED)

75

CONTINUED: (2)

He takes her in his arms, holds her tight, almost yearning, says:

JOHN

(continuing)

Listen to me, Betty. There's something here -- something between us -- let's build on that. Look how we used to fight -- we hardly ever fight anymore.

BETTY

That's because we hardly care anymore.

(while John holds her)

You know what we have between us, John? What I've been thinking. I think we have different reasons for staying together... but as long as we do...

(she speaks this

slowly now)

... we never have to have a relationship with anybody.

JOHN

(looks at her hard;

then steadily, quietly)

I'll take you home. I suppose this is it.

(shakes his head)

Nobody ever understood why I was with you anyway, none of my friends, not even me.

(hating her now --

really hitting hard)

You're a sick, pathetic, neurotic, selfish -- I think I've stayed with you just to punish myself.

BETTY

(being brave)

Whew. I thought that was my reason.

JOHN

(after a pause)

I hate you.

Betty nods and faces front as John puts the car in gear and speeds off.

CUT TO:

76 INT. JOHN'S OFFICE - DAY

John is alone, working, as his private PHONE RINGS and he answers it.

JOHN
Hello.

BETTY'S VOICE
Oh, John, I had to call, even though we're not speaking. John? John?

JOHN
Yes.

BETTY'S VOICE
(very fast)
The TV Guide thing came out and, John, it's all these pages and pages of these incredible, wonderful pictures of me. The story is called "Whatever Happened To Betty Bird".

JOHN
What did?

BETTY'S VOICE
Anyway, John, hot diggity dog, huh?
(pause)
So I'll hang up then. I just wanted to tell you. And everybody's been calling. Okay? Bye-bye, John.

JOHN
(quickly, before she hangs up)
Betty?

BETTY
Huh?

JOHN
I'm happy for you.

BETTY
I know it. 'Bye, John.

CUT TO:

77 INT. BETTY'S APARTMENT - DAY

John comes in the door and sees Lana is there, talking on the phone.

(CONTINUED)

77 CONTINUED:

John is annoyed at her presence and stands inside the doorway, obviously trying to decide whether or not to leave.

LANA
(talking on phone)
... listen, tell him nobody's breaking
down doors to get to him so he better
take that part. This is the new
Hollywood, everybody does everything.
(notices John,
covers mouthpiece)
Hello, beauty.

Back to phone, annoyed, but first indicates the bedroom to John, mouthing 'She's in there'. Then very annoyed, into phone:

LANA
(continuing)
Then let's drop him. I don't want
to represent -- okay. Tell him the
important word in 'show business' is
'business'. Yeah. Yeah. I'll be
suing ya.

Former is said as a bad joke as she hangs up the phone and begins writing down some notes in her appointment book.

JOHN
Did she invite all her friends?

BETTY
(continuing writing,
glancing up)
I am all her friends. Ever notice?
She'll be ready in a minute.

JOHN
She called and asked me to go with
her. Did she call you?

LANA
(smiles)
No. I came all by myself.

JOHN
Well, fine. And I'm leaving.

LANA
I'm not going with her, John.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

LANA (CONT'D)
(finishes writing,
straightens up and
closes pen)

I just didn't want her to be alone.
I have a friend waiting downstairs
in my car.

JOHN

We're not together anymore, you know.
I'm just here because she called.
And from now on, she'll have to call
me every time she wants to see me.
Because I won't be here.

LANA

What is it, John? Some court case
you just can't stand to lose? With
her, I understand -- you're some, I
don't know, kind of security. But
what is it you want?

JOHN

I want her -- what I want is -- I
want her to do what I want.
(slight pause)
I didn't mean that.

LANA

Yes, you did.

JOHN

Listen, I can and have had any girl
I want in this town -- anyone I want.
If you think I can't get along without
her... What she doesn't understand is
that she is goddam lucky to have a
forty-year-old, successful, attractive,
unattached lawyer. Who actually
proposed marriage to her.

Closing her address book and putting it in her purse,
and closing purse, fixing scarf:

LANA

Please, John, please. People that
can't break up when they should, I
don't understand.

Furious, but shouting in a whisper so Betty won't hear:

(CONTINUED)

77 CONTINUED: (3)

JOHN

What do you understand? You know
what you are? A pimp. What you do
for a living is to get everybody laid
-- is what you do. You make deals
that are disgusting. You're vulgar,
obnoxious, ignorant. You are the
most repulsive woman I've ever met.

LANA

(a pause; she weighs
this)

Your mother must have been a lulu. I
have never met a lawyer who wasn't --
(putting out her

cigarette)

No. I'm too good at this.

(crosses to the door)

I've got a date downstairs waiting.

Tell her I said 'mazel tov'.

(turns to leave, but
turns back facing John)

Help her tonight, John.

She exits.

CUT TO:

78 INT. GREEN ROOM - NIGHT

Several people, celebrities and their guests or represen-
tatives, are sitting in the Green Room watching the Talk
Show in progress. Betty and John sit to the side of them
all on a rear sofa. Betty is chewing her cud, very nervous.

BETTY

(after watching the
screen for a bit)

Thank you, John, for not talking.

I don't know where I am, I'm so
nervous. Do I have hives on my neck?
Look.

JOHN

(answering quietly)

No. You look good.

BETTY

I don't at all. More rotten.

Thanks, though. Whew. I feel like
I'm going to faint.

(CONTINUED)

78 CONTINUED:

Bernie enters with TOM, an usher.

BERNIE
You're next, Betty.

BETTY
(standing up)
What do I do?

BERNIE
Tom will walk you out. Okay?

BETTY
Yeah. Thanks. See ya later, John.
(she kisses him)
Don't watch. No, do. If I just
don't throw up. I'll see you here.
(to Bernie)
Will he be here?

Bernie nods. Betty turns to John.

BETTY
(continuing)
I'll see you here.

She kisses John again and, adjusting her hair, exits the room with Tom.

CUT TO:

79 INT. TALK SHOW - EARLY EVENING

HOST
Ladies and Gentlemen... Miss Betty
Bird.

Betty enters through the parting curtains as the ORCHESTRA PLAYS. She smiles, but appears nervous, waving to the audience and bobbing her head. She throws her arms up in the air and lets out a merry scream and sits. LARGE APPLAUSE THROUGHOUT. The Host is really pleased and astonished.

HOST
Well... what have we here?

BETTY
(not getting it, looking
over her shoulder)
Where?

(CONTINUED)

79

CONTINUED:

As audience laughs, she gets it, leans over and touches Host.

BETTY
Oh. Ooooo, that's real cashmere.

HOST
Did you just scream?

BETTY
Yes.

HOST
Why?

BETTY
So I wouldn't go to the bathroom.

Audience laughs. Betty talks very fast throughout.

BETTY
(continuing)
Please, it's still touch and go.
I'm very nervous. You are so handsome.

HOST
(loving it, but
'tough-guy' teasing)
Oh, yeah? What should we do about
it, baby?

BETTY
Listen, you can look at a menu it
doesn't mean you're ordering.

Audience applauds.

HOST
(feigning surprise
and astonishment)
Whose show is this?

A big smile as she leans over and touches him again:

BETTY
Ours.

Big audience laughter.

HOST
You're a wild one. Why are you so
nervous talking to me?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BETTY
Oh, it's not you. It's them.
(indicating other guests)

Laughter and applause.

BETTY
(continuing)
I am a terrific fan of everyone
sitting there.

Host does a wonderful take of 'what's going on here?'

BETTY
(continuing)
Oh, don't be hurt. It's just I
never watch your show.

Host throws his pencil in the air and walks off the show,
to the enormous merriment of other guests and audience.

BETTY
I mean, I go to bed early! I'm in
bed! Come back.

No one heeds her shouting. She looks guilty and flustered. When the Host doesn't return and everyone, including the other guests, keep laughing and applauding, Betty gets up and looks for him, crosses down to the audience shouting "What did I do?" She looks to the other guests for support but they are all carrying on themselves. Finally, she turns to the bandleader and says "Play something, hurry", and the band starts playing and quickly Betty gets an idea; pulls off her suit jacket and walks back and forth along the edge of the stage like a stripper, swinging the jacket. Then she suddenly throws it into the audience, which makes them respond hysterically. Then she throws one shoe, the other one, her belt, all the time moving and dipping and bumping and grinding like a terrific stripper. As she begins unbuttoning her blouse slowly, the Host comes running from between the curtains screaming "Stop, we'll be cancelled" and throws his arms around her while the audience screams and shouts their enthusiasm for Betty. Betty and the Host are laughing as the Host yells over all the shouting "For Petesake, go to a commercial", and he and Betty continue hugging each other and laughing as audience stops clapping in rhythm, yelling "take it off" and such, screaming, and just applauds her wildly.

CUT TO:

80

INT. TALK SHOW - EARLY EVENING

A different evening. Betty entering the curtain in a new outfit, beaming. The audience applauds wildly. She dips one shoulder of her dress down during the applause as a hint of the strip and the Host, enjoying it, stands and shouts "No -- no -- please -- none of that." Betty laughs and sits down. Audience continues applause.

HOST

Well.

BETTY

Yeah. I'd like to go out and come in again. I love that applause.

(to audience)

You make this agent's little starlet very happy. Why don't you all come home with me?

Audience screams and applauds.

HOST

Now cut that out. They have to stay here until the end of the show.

BETTY

How come I'm first tonight? Is that bad?

HOST

Do you know the phone calls we got on her appearance here? And the mail?

Audience applauds.

BETTY

I've gotten all these calls for all these things now. Shows and stuff. It's terrific.

HOST

Now I never saw your TV series.

Betty looks at him a second, picks up her bag, and walks off the show. Audience applauds and Host laughs so hard his eyes are tearing.

CUT TO:

81

INT. TALK SHOW

Betty sits alone with Host who is attractive and English. John watches from backstage.

(CONTINUED)

81 CONTINUED:

BETTY

I don't know. I suppose you can make it with an agent to get in to see a casting man. And you can even make it with a casting man to see a director. I suppose you can make it with a director to see a producer. And listen, it's possible you can make it with a producer to get a part. But ya know what? You can never make it with a whole audience and that's where it's at!

(to the audience)

Right?

Great cheering and applause from the audience.

CUT TO:

82 EXT. JOHN'S CAR - EVENING

Betty and John are driving in his car, as Betty talks.

BETTY

So if I hadn't done that show, I could have done Women's World which tapes at the same time. But how often do these New York guys come out here, huh? You know? So the point I'm making is that the Women's World show, which I thought I'd lost, well, their producer called Lester and said I could do it anytime I want... I mean, the reaction to me is that big. It's like the word is out, John... and I'm hot now. And this show tonight with the Englishman is really class, you see. A whole schmeer big deal prestige thing.

JOHN

Well, you know I'm not into television. I think it's really... mediocre, at best. But tonight I thought --

BETTY

(interrupting)

John, c'mon, how many people would watch these things if they were classy ... or intellectual.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOHN

Wait, I didn't make my point. I was very, very impressed with your answers tonight. Charming, bright...

BETTY

Oh. I don't know... the whole thing went better at rehearsal really. But thank you.

JOHN

What?

BETTY

At rehearsal, I threw in some funnier little bits... like I took off my hair ribbon when he first asked me and pretended to strangle myself. Stuff like that. Cute. It had a nice build, though, both times.

JOHN

Are all these shows rehearsed?

BETTY

Sure. I mean, in one way or another. They give you all your questions and answers before the show and you better study them or you're up the creek. And sometimes more. Listen, some of them have cue cards with everything, right in front of ya. You can't be spontaneous... I mean, you can't make the Host look like a jerk. They're very scared guys, very neurotic, all of them. I mean, you better let them win, or look good, or whatever their thing is if you want to be asked back.

John is very upset, starts to speak, but says nothing.

CUT TO:

83 INT. TALK SHOW

Betty sits with Host. No other guests. John is watching in the Green Room.

BETTY

Well, when I first get up in the morning, I bring in the paper.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

83

CONTINUED:

BETTY (CONT'D)

And the first thing I read is the obituary column. If I'm not there, I figure I can go on with the paper. Then I read the gossip column, and then I read the astrology column, which I believe in, sort of. Then I read the "Thought For The Day." And then I read the whole paper and that's when I start going downhill.

Audience laughs, as does Host.

BETTY

(continuing)

And I read Variety and the Hollywood Reporter -- for tips, ya know. You know what my ambition is? Someday to read in Variety that they're looking for a Betty Bird type. Someone just like me! I want to be a whole category, a whole type, all by myself. I want to be ter-rific!

Host and audience laugh.

CUT TO:

84

INT. GAME SHOW - DAY

Big sign over the celebrity guests with the name of the show, SQUARING THE CIRCLE. All the celebrities sit in round cubicles which form the face of a clock.

The HOST sits facing the clock with TWO CONTESTANTS. Betty sits in the ten o'clock cubicle.

HOST

(to First Contestant
-- a male)

All right, you have another question.

FIRST CONTESTANT

I choose Betty Bird at ten o'clock.

Betty hits a high note and cups her hands around her face.

HOST

Betty. Your question.

BETTY

(being funny)

Yes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HOST
(reading question)
"What is the difference between a
male nurse and a female nurse?"

BETTY
The male nurse has a stethoscope.

Audience laughs and applauds.

CUT TO:

INT. TALK SHOW - EARLY EVENING

Host sits talking with a lovely young STARLET and Betty.
The Starlet, overly smiling, condescendingly is asking
the Host a question.

STARLET
Did she say she was an actress?

BETTY
Yes, she did.

STARLET
(turns to Betty)
I've never seen you in any pictures.

BETTY
How about that for coincidences.

STARLET
I only meant --

BETTY
(interrupting)
It isn't bad enough, now she's going
to tell me what she meant.

HOST
Let me get in here...

BETTY
I don't know if there's room. She,
alone, makes a very crowded stage.

STARLET
(to Host)
Could I just finish what I was saying
about how my analysis has changed me?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

85

BETTY
Into what?

HOST
(to Betty)
Have you ever been analyzed?

BETTY
Please. People go eight years and say 'Oh, I'm so much better'. 'You're eight years older, for godsake', I tell them.

Betty gestures and audience laughs.

CUT TO:

86

INT. TALK SHOW - EARLY EVENING

Betty is in the number one chair and obviously hasn't been on very long. Host lets her go, doing 'takes'.

BETTY
... My mail is mostly really sweet and some of it... is beautiful. But the sickies, brother. Dirty, whew. But the terrific letters I really mean to answer, and I will, if I ever stop screwing around. Is that all right to say on TV? There's that word again ... 'around'. But what I started to say is, what I hate on talk shows is when you come back, like after the commercial, and everybody is bent over whispering to each other. The audience all feels like they missed the best part. Which is the truth, right? Right?

Audience applauds.

BETTY
(continuing; to Host)
See, I was right.
(turns to WOMAN GUEST)
I read your book that you were talking about before.

WOMAN GUEST
Did you enjoy it?

(CONTINUED)

86

CONTINUED:

BETTY

Do they know what it's about?
(indicating audience)
Some of the people that wrote me
those letters I think read that book.
(to audience again)
It's about every kind of sex you ever
heard of. But what do I know, I'm
only thirty-seven.

WOMAN GUEST

I think only very small-minded or
ignorant people would be offended
by it. Which are you?

BETTY

Get off my back. Miss Tough Cookie
over there. I mention it to give you
a plug but, since it's a big bomb,
don't you think I'm going to talk
about it all night and make a big
winner out of a big loser.

CUT TO:

87 INT. TALK SHOW - DAY

A daytime talk show with a female HOSTESS. The audience
is applauding and Betty is just entering, wearing a far
more flamboyant outfit and look than ever before. From
now on, Betty's look becomes more and more exaggerated
on the various shows.

HOSTESS

Oh, Betty, darling, you look fantastic.

Actually, she does look wonderful in this outfit.

BETTY

Don't I? I mean, once a year you
might have a day where you know you
look fantastic. Today, I look fantastic.

Audience applauds.

HOSTESS

You are just on every show I turn on
lately. All the game shows and talk
shows and interviews. When do you
have time to live?

(CONTINUED)

87

CONTINUED:

BETTY

I live my life on camera now. I really do. I just go home between shows to sleep. No kitten.

HOSTESS

How do you stay so young? Tell us women, what is your secret?

BETTY

I have a lot of baby fat and no...
(indicates bust)
... you know. I come out, people think it's Claude Jarman, Jr.

HOSTESS

(to audience)

Do you know who she's talking about?
A child actor from the forties.
You're aging yourself.

BETTY

I'm thirty-seven.

HOSTESS

Oooo, she tells her age.

BETTY

I tell anybody who'll listen -- cab drivers, waitresses, muggers. Please -- I survived -- that's a lot. How old are you?

HOSTESS

Old enough to say 'now we have a commercial.'

CUT TO:

88

INT. JOHN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

John is eating, sitting on the floor near the burning fireplace. He's eating alone, though there is another place set. Suddenly, the front door opens and Betty comes tearing in, taking off wraps and talking most excitedly.

BETTY

Whatta ya say, handsome? I couldn't call to tell you I was late because I wanted to see your face when I told ya the news, hot off the press.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

88

JOHN

It's stew in the cassarole right here.

Betty sits down on the floor opposite John and serves herself.

BETTY

Terrific. Whew. I have no breath.
I was running.

JOHN

Want some wine?

BETTY

John, are you gonna act withdrawn
now and freaky because I'm late.
We taped late. What can I do?

JOHN

(pouring her wine)

I'm sorry I started without you. It
just seems an hour is a long time to
wait.

BETTY

(eating)

I don't want any wine. Plus I have
a time problem, John, that's all,
there's nothing I can do about it.
Before we fight, can I tell you my
news? The head of the network that
I've been doing the show on -- well,
he's having a party tomorrow and I
am the only performer invited. That's
the truth. I'm the only one. So I
figure somethin's up. Somethin' big,
John. I bet I get offered my own
interview show or something. I mean,
why else? If I do, then I want to call
it like the Bird Cage or somethin' cute
like that and make it like a woman's
talk show. Anyway, you can come
tomorrow too because I'm allowed to
bring one guest. It's from five to
seven. I know you'll be late, that's
okay.

(pause)

Oh, c'mon, John. It means so much to
me. This could be it. Okay? You
can come late, John. John?

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BETTY (CONT'D)

How would you like a kick in the ass?
God, you are so handsome. What about
"See The Birdie" for a title? This
stew is terrific and so are you.

CUT TO:

INT. COCKTAIL PARTY - EARLY EVENING

John enters a most elegant and crowded small hotel party room. He looks around for Betty but he doesn't see her. Finally, he approaches a lady, SYLVIA, standing on the fringe of a small group.

JOHN

Excuse me, do you know if Betty
Bird is here?

A tiny bit drunk, older, caustic, Bryn Mawr, lethal:

SYLVIA

Is she here! You missed it. Come
meet her. I'm Sylvia Brewer, from P.R.

She extends her hand, leaving her group, leading John.

JOHN

(looking around)

I'm John Harris. Uh -- where is she?

Looking around for Betty, waving to people as she walks
with John:

SYLVIA

How did everybody hear? Good news
travels. Hi. Well, my dear, she was
a triumph. The big man had no idea
and when they were introduced, I
thought he was going into immediate
cardiac arrest. Everyone applauded
and laughed. He was ashen. I mean,
she'd frighten the Pope. That's not
an act with her, we have our very own
sick joke. Certainly got things going
though. Marvelous party.

Betty is SEEN, looking a bit outlandish, in a corner of
the room, with her back to John, lavishly entertaining
everyone with her jokes and chatter. Her audience has
an unkind, nudging-each-other laughter, and others in
the room glance over at her with wry amusement.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SYLVIA

Oh, there she is. Miss Television.
Our little wind-up lady. You wind
her up and she becomes --

John turns around and hurries out of the room, unseen by Betty, and leaving a totally puzzled Sylvia.

CUT TO:

INT. JOHN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

John has MUSIC PLAYING, a fire going, stands looking out at the ocean, holding milk in his hands. He is wearing chinos and a cut-off sweat-shirt. A moment later, the door opens and Betty comes tearing in.

BETTY

(very happy, talking
very fast)

Ah, John. I wish so ya could've been there. I mean, they went crazy over me! They flipped! Oh, I wish you could've seen it, John. I bet anything somethin' big is in the works. Really big. Let me put on your robe. I'll be right back.

Betty does a Betty Grable pin-up pose, kicks her foot up and, cheering, exits. John looks greatly distressed. He turns and looks out at the ocean again.

CUT TO:

91 INT. TALK SHOW

John stands backstage and watches.

BETTY

Acting is a terrible life. The only thing worse than not working is working. I would like a really wonderful part now... I mean, one terrific part. See, audiences that see you on TV or on the stage, whatever, think you are, really are that person and that it's you who is really doing those things or thinking up those terrific lines. They do! They don't know it's some writer someplace --

(to Host)

Get me a part, with all your pull.

(CONTINUED)

91 CONTINUED:

HOST
I admire your energy.

BETTY
Don't change the subject.

Audience laughs.

BETTY
(continuing)
Except my series was good. But, you know, all kinds of things make you a terrific actress. Like Bette Davis used to come in a door like this.
(she gets up and demonstrates)
But, you see, while she did it, the music went like this.

She demonstrates the same thing, but this time she makes many drum noises and loud sounds.

BETTY
(continuing)
See? That Bette Davis wasn't all that hot.

Audience applauds as Betty sits down again.

CUT TO:

92 INT. COOKING AND INTERVIEW SHOW - DAYTIME

Betty is doing a daytime cook show that has a live audience. She wears a large apron as does the host, EDWIN. Betty is grating cheese in a mixing bowl; another large pot is boiling.

EDWIN
Then next...
(amazed)
... are you going to add grated cheese?

BETTY
Why... what's wrong?

EDWIN
I can't imagine cheese in this dish.

BETTY
(putting it aside)
Then let's not add it.

(CONTINUED)

92 CONTINUED:

EDWIN
(laughing with audience,
picks chees up)
You're the celebrity cook. Add it
if it calls for it.

Betty tastes it.

EDWIN
(continuing)
How is it?

Betty chokes, grabs her throat as though poisoned, and falls to the floor as though dead. The audience of women shriek and clap.

CUT TO:

93 INT. TALK SHOW

Several guests are sitting on stage, grouped on either side of the HOST, who has obviously been reminiscing with this old CHARACTER ACTOR. The Actor has huge blown-up photographs of him in a lifetime of movies.

HOST
I think you've probably worked with
every star in the business.

CHARACTER ACTOR
Oh, yeah. A lot of them.

Betty leans in from her end seat.

BETTY
I ran into Joan Crawford on the
street the other day.

HOST
What did she say?

BETTY
'Get out of my way.'

Big laugh from guests and audience.

CUT TO:

94 INT. LANA'S HOME - PARTY - NIGHT

Many, many people are drinking champagne and renewing old acquaintances.

(CONTINUED)

94

CONTINUED:

It is the middle of the evening and Betty is making her way over to John, Nancy and Doug. The party is an absolute contrast to Lana's earlier party in regard to Betty. Now everyone knows her and greets her, or is trying to get to know her.

BETTY

What a terrific party.

Joining the group, with her very handsome fiance, SIMON, embracing Betty:

LANA

I always said she'd make it. My friend, the star.

BETTY

(teasing)

It's very lonely here on top.

All laugh.

BETTY

Nancy, you look terrific. John, did Nancy tell you she's doing a series next season?

JOHN

(openly shocked and upset; turns to Nancy)

No.

NANCY

Oh, it's nothing.

JOHN

(intense, bothered)

I thought you didn't like acting.

NANCY

John, my goodness, you're so serious.

(she finds a waiter and calls)

Waiter? Could we have some more champagne here?

WAITER fills all their glasses as they talk.

BETTY

(taking Nancy's hand)

I think it's the best news...

(CONTINUED)

94 CONTINUED: (2)

LANA
(to Betty)
You're the hot flash. I bet more people listen to you than listen to the President.

BETTY
You know, he did talk shows. I told John that. And the Vice President and the Secretary of State, the biggest movie stars --

LANA
(interrupting)
Only when they have something to sell. Or egos this big. They give you five minutes of their personal life for five minutes of plugging their picture or planned parenthood. I never let my clients do them.
(to Simon)
Give me a cigarette, hon.

JOHN
What I cannot understand is why people sit home watching a bunch of people talk on television. Why don't those same audiences just turn around and talk to each other?

DOUG
For us, John. I mean, if people didn't watch these things she's on, they'd take them off.

BETTY
(bothered by what
Lana said before)
Why don't you let your clients on them?

LANA
Because my clients are on the way up and those people don't do talk shows. You do them on your way down, or over to the side, or out. Not the real biggies. I don't mean you. You're exactly what this country wants right now. You're the one. There's always one, you're it. Cash in.

(CONTINUED)

94 CONTINUED: (3)

BETTY
(bothered, changing
the subject)
When are you and Simon getting married?

LANA
(re-lighting her
cigarette)
June.

DOUG
What do you do, Simon?

LANA
(through her cigarette)
He's going to be a writer.

To Betty, who looks sad and thoughtful, puts an arm around her:

NANCY
Hey. This is your party. Go see
your guests. You're the American
dream.

CUT TO:

95 EXT. NETWORK EXIT AND PARKING LOT

At the network exit, John waits outside the door. Betty, a small crowd around her, is signing autographs. John tries not to be openly angry throughout. Betty, finished, joins John and takes his arm.

BETTY
Sorry, John, I had to.

JOHN
(nods)
How did it go? This show?

BETTY
Terrific.

A pause as they walk.

JOHN
Why do you say terrific all the time?

BETTY
I don't know. 'Terrific.' I just
say it.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

95

CONTINUED:

BETTY (CONT'D)
 (thinks a minute)
 I guess it's because I can't think
 of a word that means more.
 (a slight pause;
 almost to herself)
 'Terrific.'
 (to John)
 What's wrong with 'terrific'?

JOHN
 Nothing. It gets trite if you use
 it all the time.

BETTY
 Yeah? Well, it suits me. It's the
 way I see things. Just -- 'terrific.'

JOHN
 Why don't you say 'wonderful', or
 'how nice' or 'lovely'?

They have arrived at the car. As he is opening the car
 door, Betty gets in and speaks:

BETTY
 Well, there's another expression I
 use all the time that might be better.
 (slight pause)
 The second word is 'you'!

Betty closes the door loudly and tries concentrating now
 on tying a scarf around her head. John pauses, stops,
 then walks around and gets in the car. They drive off,
 with Betty staring away from John, looking out the side
 window.

CUT TO:

96

INT. TALK SHOW

Betty sits with one other guest and the HOST. She is in
 the middle of a subject. John watches from the audience.

BETTY
 Last night you had on that guy who
 said he's retiring. Phew, I say.
 I get so tired of these performers
 who make such a big deal out of
 retiring all the time. They want
 to quit and be real people.
 (MORE)

(CONTINUED)

96

CONTINUED:

BETTY (CONT'D)

Why don't they just quit? Usually they make sixty-seven announcements and appear on a hundred talk shows to tell you they don't want to be famous. Bushwaw. They're freaking out is what they're doin'. They're having a kind of nervous breakdown all over the place, all over the screen -- and people love it. It's true. I read in this book on actors that the public loves to see you make it -- then they want to see you lose it all -- then -- then -- is the big thing -- the comeback. Everybody loves a comeback. And all those people that quit. They all try someday to come back. Ninety-seven percent of the time. And audiences love it. Go ape. Anyway -- let 'em quit, I say! Who needs 'em. We need the room. We stucked. I couldn't even get a job... so this is my comeback and let me tell you I'm mighty glad to be back. And I'm hangin' in. Thanks for having me. I love you all!

Audience and Host applaud. Betty yells.

BETTY

(continuing)

I love you all.

They clap more.

CUT TO:

97

INT. TALK SHOW

Betty talking with HOST. John is watching it on the set in the Green Room.

BETTY

I'm so upset, I'm bananas.

HOST

You? I'm a nervous wreck myself.

BETTY

Yeah, but you're invited back tomorrow night.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

97

Audience applauds.

BETTY

(continuing)

I mean, that's not a hint. Oh, I spit on you. Let's not be controversial tonight. John's watching and he gets upset if I'm controversial.

HOST

Who's John? Your husband.

BETTY

No. I don't have a husband anymore.

HOST

Is he your boyfriend?

BETTY

(frowning)

I think he's my conscience. He's a very cut-off type. Let's not get into John. I mean, he's very --

(whispers)

-- uptight.

HOST

Are you two getting married?

BETTY

No.

(suddenly deciding
to tell it all)

I mean, we lived together for three years and all we do is fight... and break up... and go back together again. It's really -- uh --

(stage whispers)

We really better change the subject or I'm going to get it.

(smiles into camera
and waves)

Hi, John!

(to Host)

Hurry up. Ask me something else...

CUT TO:

98

INT. DRESSING ROOM

Betty's washing her face.

(CONTINUED)

98

CONTINUED:

JOHN
I don't ever want you to talk about
me out there again like that.

BETTY
(very underplayed)
Fine.

JOHN
I'm not on display.

BETTY
(very underplayed)
Right.

JOHN
I don't have that sick ego. Please
don't ever do that again. Please.

BETTY
(very underplayed)
Sure.

JOHN
I mean it.

BETTY
(drying face; still cool)
John, you mean everything. Life is a
very serious thing for you.

JOHN
Well, that was humiliating --

BETTY
But you see what I found out tonight?
You can talk about nothing, John, and
they think it's something. John, I
can be something here. I can be
something big here, John. Something's
happening. Don't bring me down, John.
I'm gonna be a star!

She kisses the mirror and goes in the washroom to dress.
John looks at kiss mark on the mirror.

CUT TO:

99

INT. JOHN'S CAR - EARLY EVENING

Coming from Betty's apartment, John and Betty are in his
car... John driving.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

99

John approaches that familiar corner and there is that familiar sight. The Man Painting His House White.

JOHN
(to Betty)
There's that man.

BETTY
(looks and then away)
I don't care about him.

She looks away from John and out the front windows again.

CUT TO:

100

INT. JOHN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

John watches TV from bed. Betty talks with Host... she looks noticeably changed... more flamboyant.

BETTY (V.O.)
(answering a question)
I changed my hair because I was hiding behind it. This is awful. I just hate the way you have to sit there and listen to me. You poor guy. This is terrible. I feel so sorry for you.

HOST (V.O.)
I'm fine. Why are you in New York?

BETTY (V.O.)
I love New York. It's just laugh, laugh, drink, drink. Did I tell you about my dream? Even in my dream I knew I shouldn't because you were married, but I did. And I regret it.
(pause; she smiles)
But you were great.

HOST (V.O.)
The next guest --

Audience laughs.

BETTY (V.O.)
(to audience)
Well, I'm not a virgin.

HOST (V.O.)
Neither am I.

(CONTINUED)

100 CONTINUED:

BETTY (V.O.)
I should hope not, a guy like you.
Is he humpy?

She winks at him. He does a take to the audience.

BETTY (V.O.)
(continuing)
That's the best thing about this show.
I mean, why people watch you.
Underneath everything that's being
said, it all sounds dirty. I mean,
you have a sexy talk show. Sexy
isn't right. Dirty! Doesn't he?

Audience applauds.

CUT TO:

101 INT. TALK SHOW

Betty sits in the number two chair while Terry, the singer from the Kling auditions, is sitting in the number one chair, talking to the HOST.

TERRY
... and I keep dreaming we're closing
even though it's such a big hit.

BETTY
Well, Terry, you know, the last three
or four years in California I kept
having this recurring nightmare kind
of thing where I would hear voices
saying "Betty Bird is dead"... all
these friends and people I didn't
even know saying "Did you hear? She's
dead." And, oh, I would wake up
soaking wet and go out and drive all
over Hollywood in the middle of the
night.

HOST
Now that is far out.

BETTY
(very gesticulating)
Last night I dreamed I discovered a
word that meant everything.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

101 CONTINUED:

BETTY (CONT'D)
This word was so sophisticated and smart that I would walk around New York saying it about all sorts of things, you know, just dropping it like it was nothing, and people would grab their heads and say "wow" or "man" or just stare at me in awe.

HOST
What was the word?

BETTY
I forgot.

All laugh.

CUT TO:

102 INT. JOHN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

John watches this show in bed. Holding remote control. Talk Show APPLAUSE as a number has finished and the entertainers have exited. CAMERA on guests and HOST in a FULL SHOT.

BETTY (V.O.)
Did you say before they sang that they were brother and sister?

HOST (V.O.)
Yes. They are.

BETTY (V.O.)
And I'm the only one that thinks it's very... freaky to see a brother and sister sing like that to each other?

Other guests and audience all laugh and clap. Host roars with laughter.

John shuts off set with remote control.

CUT TO:

103 INT. TALK SHOW

A very handsome ACTOR, all steamed up, is sitting in the number one chair complaining about this actress he just worked with. Another man sits next to him, and Betty sits in the number three chair.

(CONTINUED)

103 CONTINUED:

ACTOR

(angry; trying to
make a point, but
too emotional)

... And I would never do a play with
her again. She is rude, thoughtless,
selfish, driven, ambitious, steals
your business, tries to upstage you
all the time, she's a scene stealer --

BETTY

(leaning)

In Hollywood, we have a word for
someone like that.

HOST

What is it?

BETTY

Star.

CUT TO:

104 INT. TALK SHOW - NIGHT

Betty has just come out and is talking to the Host. She
is very excited and happy.

HOST

You seem very high tonight.

BETTY

In orbit. If I keep on this way,
you'll see me going right over this
place at eleven o'clock.

(calling; being silly)

There she goes.

HOST

Yes, you are on tonight. But what
are you on? Seriously now, have you
ever... like tonight... tried smoking
pot?

BETTY

Never. To me, it's the dumbest thing
in the world. Kid stuff. God. The
last thing I need is something that
will make me higher.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

104 CONTINUED:

BETTY (CONT'D)

And have you ever noticed -- all the people that should smoke pot never would, and all the people that do smoke it don't need to. So what's the point?

HOST

I have no idea. But it sounded right. What would you like to talk about tonight?

BETTY

You know what I'd like to do? Go down in the audience. Ya know? I'd like to go down and talk to the people in the audience.

HOST

Are you serious?

BETTY

Could I? Listen... these are my people!
(to audience)
Right?

Audience applauds.

HOST

Well, let's turn on the house lights and go down. Can we get a microphone? Good. Let's go.

Betty and Host go down into the audience. She holds a hand-microphone and speaks to people. Answers will vary.

BETTY

(to FIRST AUDIENCE MAN)

Hi.

FIRST MAN

How are you?

BETTY

Terrific. Is that your wife?

FIRST MAN

Yes.

BETTY

I see.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BETTY (CONT'D)

(stage whispers)

You didn't tell her anything about
us, I hope. I won't either.

(to the First Man's
Wife)

Love your hair.

She spots another woman, FIRST WOMAN, and says to her:

BETTY

(continuing)

Look at you all snazzed up. You
spend all day under the hair dryer?

FIRST WOMAN

(laughing; embarrassed)

Yes.

BETTY

Listen, it looks cute. Ya wanna
ask me anything?

FIRST WOMAN

Well, I was wondering... is your
hair real color?

BETTY

That's what the bottle says... 'real
color'.

(goes to SECOND WOMAN)

Hi. Are you married?

SECOND WOMAN

Thirty-eight years.

BETTY

We got a lot in common. I was
married thirty-eight minutes.

SECOND WOMAN

I have fourteen grandchildren.

BETTY

Me, too.

(to SECOND MAN)

Now you're my type. Ya know that?
Are you married?

SECOND MAN

Fourteen years.

(CONTINUED)

104 CONTINUED: (3)

BETTY

Well, let's move along then.
(to THIRD WOMAN)
Where you from?

THIRD WOMAN

Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

BETTY

What goes on in Milwaukee?

THIRD WOMAN

(giggles)
Nothing.

BETTY

Just like Hollywood, huh?

THIRD WOMAN

My husband I think you're just
darling.

BETTY

Thank you. Can I stay with you if
I ever come to Milwaukee?

THIRD WOMAN

We'd sure love to have you.

BETTY

And I wouldn't say Milwaukee has
'nothing' as long as it has you.
(to a THIRD MAN)
Where you from?

THIRD MAN

New York City.

Audience applauds.

BETTY

They're clapping because you survived.
That your wife?

Third Man looks at lady next to him, then turns back to
Betty.

THIRD MAN

No.

BETTY

I see. This is some audience.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

104 CONTINUED: (4)

BETTY (CONT'D)

Maybe we better all move to Milwaukee.
(crosses over to

FOURTH WOMAN)

You wanna ask me anything?

FOURTH WOMAN

Are you going to have your own TV series?

BETTY

Don't you hope so? I'd like to.
What do you think I should play?

FOURTH WOMAN

(giggles)

Oh, I don't know.

BETTY

You know what I'd like. I'd like to play a slinky, beautiful spy on a series. Do you think I'd be good as a spy?

FOURTH WOMAN

Oh, I don't know. I can't feature it, frankly.

BETTY

Terrific. She just lost me a job.

(to a FOURTH MAN)

Where are you from?

FOURTH MAN

Chicago.

BETTY

So am I. Isn't it the worst?!

FOURTH MAN

I like it.

BETTY

If your idea of the stockyards is a good time. This your wife?

FOURTH MAN

Yes.

BETTY

(to FIFTH WOMAN,
his wife)

Hi. What's your name?

(CONTINUED)

104 CONTINUED: (5)

FIFTH WOMAN
Mrs. Fred Wyack.

BETTY
Funny, you don't look like a Fred.

HOST
(laughing with the
applauding audience)
We have to cut away for a commercial,
we'll be right back.

He embraces Betty, who is beaming.

CUT TO:

105 INT. JOHN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

John in bed with the glow of a picture from the set reflecting on his face. No sound. He watches. Suddenly, he turns on the SOUND with the remote control and we HEAR APPLAUSE and on the TV picture Betty enters, dressed even more outrageously. She walks down and addresses a very responsive audience. Host and guests in b.g. John watches.

BETTY (V.O.)
Were you staring at my weight as I came down here? That's very naughty. I gain... I look at food and I gain. I think of food and I gain. I'm gaining weight even as I talk to you. I'm always eating. I'm always getting dirty phone calls and my mouth is always full so I can't yell at the guys. So I'm going...
(makes sounds)
... uh-uh -- like that -- and the guys must think I'm all turned on. God. Imagine how it's gonna be when they put TV on the phones. The things we're gonna have to see. Oh, I didn't mean that the way it sounded. Why are you staring at this poor, fat, aging ingenue? Do I look like a blubber? Yeah, a whale. Smile, and make this agent's starlet a happy girl. I just got to New York this week. This is some place. I used to live here. I was a dancer. Now I'm just a country girl.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

105 CONTINUED:

BETTY (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 (reveals a shoulder
 like a stripper)
 The things that just happen right
 on the street in New York. Don't
 look in the gutters here. Shocking.
 Don't look down! Don't look up either.
 And listen, nobody cares. About
 anything. Pwey. I think... well,
 let me say this, never turned on to
 this city... but I might move here.
 (slight pause)
 Well, I expected a cheer or something.

Audience mock cheers.

John watching, suddenly concerned.

BETTY (V.O.)
 Yeah, I need an apartment here, if
 you know anybody. I want to move
 soon... I mean, here, what am I...
 chopped liver... here I bet eleven
 hundred people went ape on 5th Avenue.
 Desperately crazy about me in New
 York. There... ehh --
 (does 'com si com sa'
 gesture with hand)
 So I am fast becoming devoted to
 New York. Anyway, I want an apartment
 here.

John tries to hide his upsetment.

BETTY (V.O.)
 And, I don't know. I feel like I'm
 with the grown-ups here. And everybody
 stays up... all night, it seems --
 so I have all these friends... nobody
 goes to bed. It's terrific, and people
 call you all night long just to talk...
 far out, huh? I think I'm going to be
 Broadway's baby... only kidding. I
 don't hate it here... the opposite, if
 anything. Here's where I belong.
 But I'm going back West.
 (to the audience)
 Why no groan?

They groan.

(CONTINUED)

105 CONTINUED: (2)

BETTY (V.O.)
Thank you for the groan. I love
you all.

She throws kisses as she ends her monologue and they applaud as she exits to sit with the panel.

CUT TO:

106 INT. L.A. INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - DAY

John is waiting for the plane to unload. People come through. He sees Betty, wearing sunglasses and carrying a large hat-box. John greets her and kisses her, but it is uncomfortable. Two people come by and get autographs from Betty on sheets of paper. John takes her traveling bag. People turn to look at her now; it is partly because she is recognizable, but it is greatly because even her appearance is somewhat flamboyant now. As she and John walk:

BETTY
You look terrific, John. Great.
They didn't even have a movie on
the rotten plane... I really hate
to fly. But I didn't throw up.
I wasn't even that nervous. Just
some. Ya see my shows?

JOHN
Yes, I did.

BETTY
I'll tell you all about everything
later. Ya like 'em? No more small
potatoes, John. I have two next week
in Philadelphia and one in Chicago.
I'm a celebrity now, okay. Ya look
cute.

They go down on the escalator.

CUT TO:

107 INT. INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - DAY

At the baggage counter, getting Betty's bags, they stand with a redcap, waiting at the revolving baggage-claim.

BETTY
I'm doin' a whole bunch of talk shows
out here in the next month.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

07 CONTINUED:

BETTY (CONT'D)

And every game show is like breaking the door down to get me now. I don't know though -- some shows don't have -- ya know, class.

JOHN

When are you moving to New York?

BETTY

For what?

JOHN

Last night you said you were moving to New York.

BETTY

When?

JOHN

On that show.

BETTY

Oh, my manager and me did all that. You believed all that? I'd never live in New York. Not me. I wanna do pictures. New York is the way it was. Hollywood is where it is. This is the next city. This is the future. But people think you're more interesting, Ben says, if you say you're from New York. Even out here there's a whole thing made if you're a New York actor ... I don't know why. So we're making all that up. But I'm glad you believed it. Oh, those are mine. Right there.

The redcap takes her bags and John and Betty start to exit.

CUT TO:

108 INT. JOHN'S CAR

Driving from the airport, Betty is in the middle of talking.

BETTY

And this smart-aleck guy says, right in the middle of the show! When I was talkin' about Hollywood, he says, 'what was the earthquake like?' So I said, 'it was like 59th and Lexington any day in New York.'

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

108 CONTINUED:

BETTY (CONT'D)

Oh, and I told the one joke you didn't see because they cut it out. Said it was offensive. But it wasn't not at all. Just a joke. The thing is you have to startle them on those shows. You have to be... wild -- take a chance -- ya gotta be interesting. I mean, that host and that audience. They want to hear secrets, not just the day's news, if ya don't mind. So I gotta make stuff up. Anything. Just... surprise them all the time. Make them think you're really a character. I got some writers there to help.

JOHN

You are a character.

BETTY

See, people don't get to meet people everywhere else like us in show business. I mean, John, that audience thinks they're visiting with the guests on those dumb shows. So ya gotta play it so you're asked back. It's like in real life -- except it's more a matter of life and death. There aren't that many shows. So ya gotta change things about your person, or tell some new story. I'm gonna have to work with some writers that Ben hired for me for the shows comin' up out here. I didn't want to pay writers, but Ben worked it so these are gonna work for a percentage. Ben says 'Listen, be glad and hope you make them very rich.' Oh, I love Sunset Boulevard more than anyplace in the world.

She looks out the window.

JOHN

When you said on the show you were moving to New York... I thought it was because you didn't want to marry me.

BETTY

I don't. But I might as well not marry you in L.A. as not marry you in New York, huh?

CUT TO:

109 INT. BETTY'S APARTMENT - DAY

Betty opens the door and enters. John follows her in with two suitcases. The PHONE is RINGING and Betty is rushing to answer it.

BETTY

(answering phone)

Hi. Hi, Lana.

(then, very sweetly)

Ah, hi, Lana. Hi. Did ya? Well, I just got off the plane -- I mean, I just got in the door. I know it. Oh, thanks. I go back next month. I've got like seven talk shows lined up there already so... we'll see, huh? Yeah. How did you hear? Well, I am. I'm just guesting on it but it's a part, ya know, and I wanna do some parts. And I got two variety shows where I'll get to do skits and stuff. Plus I'm gonna do "Mary Mary" again this summer, but this time in the big theatres in the East. What? Oh, Lana. Oh, listen. Oh... ah, Lana.

(pause)

No, of course not. No, I would love to be signed with you, but I just fired Lester and you're like two days too late. The William Morris Agency. Lana, wait... will ya... No. How did I know you'd -- Lana, will ya hold it --

(turns to John, hanging up the phone)

She hung up?

JOHN

Did she want you to sign with her?

Unpacking now, and hanging things up; very busy:

BETTY

Yes.

JOHN

Did you fire Lister? After all these years?

BETTY

(challenging)

C'mon, John, don't lay on guilts, if ya don't mind.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

109 CONTINUED:

BETTY (CONT'D)

I need some representation now. I'm just starting to come into my prime now. I don't mean that smart either, John. The opposite, if anything. Very sincere. In my business ya gotta see yourself as a commodity. I'm hot, John. Hot as a pistol right now. There's not a show on TV that doesn't want me.

JOHN

(with bite)

As what?

BETTY

(angry)

As a personality. As me. As anything I want to be, John!

JOHN

You always wanted Lana to represent you.

BETTY

(a slight pause)

I want an agent with some class.
(another pause; stops
unpacking a second)

John?

JOHN

Betty.

BETTY

You never thought much of my talent.
Huh, John?

JOHN

What do I know?

BETTY

(unpacking again)

I don't care though, John. Mox nix to me.

JOHN

What am I supposed to say?

BETTY

Lana never thought I was talented either.

(CONTINUED)

109 CONTINUED: (2)

JOHN

I know.

BETTY

Most people, huh? Most people thought I was worth nothin', huh? I'm not mad, John. I'm happy. I won. Look how it all turned out. I haven't changed anything.

JOHN

Honestly? You want me to be honest? For once -- about your acting. I don't know if a lot of people ever thought you had any talent. But I don't know anybody that doesn't like you.

BETTY

It's easy for people to like somebody when they're down. Then they seem more up. It's nice for them. Well, the news is I always knew I had it, John. Talent. Don't turn away. We can look at each other. You know how I know? Picture a group of actors in a movie -- in the background, ya know? Like extras. A group of extras. And picture me in there. In the background. I wouldn't fit. I mean that. Your eye would go right to me. And that's star quality. That's what they mean by 'it', when they say "she's got 'it'."

JOHN

Your bags are all here.

(slight pause)

You'd fit very well in that background.

John starts to leave.

BETTY

Not anymore. John. Thank you for the money... don't send any more. I'm fine now. Thanks.

John leaves.

CUT TO:

110 INT. BETTY'S DRESSING ROOM, TV NETWORK

John opens the door and enters her dressing room, looking around. He is openly upset. SOUNDS of the Talk Show and its audience's reactions, LAUGHTER, APPLAUSE, whatever, and the not-too-distant SOUNDS of the show itself... guests, host, orchestra... all in the b.g.

Betty is not seen. She is behind a screen, changing clothes. She calls.

BETTY (O.S.)

(from behind screen)

Ben? Already? They ready already?

JOHN

It's me.

BETTY (O.S.)

(from behind screen)

John? Hi, John. How are ya? Whatta ya know, John? I can't stop, John, I'm late. I was supposed to be the first guest. Well, tough, huh? I had a meeting for my own series today plus two interviews for the press and all sorts of stuff. How's every little thing, John? Oh... oh, listen. Is there any booze or anything out there for ya?

JOHN

No.

BETTY (O.S.)

(from behind screen)

I'm supposed to be out there right now. You gonna watch the show, John? Oh, and I'm working on a nightclub act...

JOHN

Betty, stop it.

BETTY (O.S.)

(from behind screen;
a moment of silence;
then)

What?

JOHN

Stop it.

She appears from behind the screen. She has gone all the way now... it is a wild look.

(CONTINUED)

110 CONTINUED:

Her hair has been dyed a new and outrageous color, it is teased to stand out almost in a natural... her make-up is flamboyant... she wears a sort of tent-like muu-muu that is extravagant in color, style, and yardage. She has a huge feather boa. She looks fantastic. She pauses, going to her dressing table and putting several rings on, and just keeps looking over at John.

BETTY

I don't know what you're into tonight, John, but I gotta work. I gotta go out there and be funny, so don't bring me down. I mean it, John. I gotta stay up there. I mean, think about coolin' it, okay?

JOHN

I want you to come with me.

BETTY

Listen, I gotta get out there in a minute, John. I gotta think, I gotta -- ya know, rev up, I gotta... Hey, why don't you sit down? Or go wait in the Green Room, huh.

John stares at her, with incredible containment of anger, almost contempt. Avoiding his look, she goes to the make-up table and fiddles with her make-up and hair.

BETTY

Hey, John, do me a favor, will ya? Read me some of those feedlines I have to throw him tonight. Right on that table next t'ya.

JOHN

(talking very fast)

Get out of it. Get out of this. Get out.

BETTY

Get out of what? Whatta ya mean, 'get out'?

JOHN

(shouting)

This. All of this! Get out of it!

BETTY

(turns to him)

What, get out of it? Are you kiddin'?

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

110 CONTINUED: (2)

BETTY (CONT'D)
I'm up on top again. Right where I
was before.

JOHN
You were never on top before.

BETTY
Oh yeah? Well, if I wasn't before,
John, I sure am now!

JOHN
You know what this is? It's the Roman
Coliseum! It's the zoo! It's the
great American freak show!

BETTY
(very upset, trying
to be funny)
Why don't ya say what ya mean, John?

She smiles. He doesn't smile back. She loses her smile.

BETTY
(continuing)
Did it ever occur to you I'm doing
what I want? I gotta get ready. Okay?

She picks up feedlines and starts memorizing them.

JOHN
Don't you know that you're a joke!

BETTY
Terrific! That's just what the world
needs.

Back to memorizing -- she keeps going back to memorizing
or fixing her appearance.

JOHN
Don't you know what people are thinking
when they're watching you?

BETTY
They're watching.

JOHN
They're laughing at you.

BETTY
They're laughin'.

(CONTINUED)

110 CONTINUED: (3)

JOHN
(emotional)
What kind of a pathetic life is this?

BETTY
(trying desperately
not to get furious;
holding on)
John. If you don't like my life,
why don't ya go live one of your own?

JOHN
(stunned, afraid
almost)
What?

BETTY
Just don't feed off me anymore, John.
Stop living off my life. Don't stand
around telling me how sad I am, John.
I'm doing great. Terrific. What are
you doin' that's better, John?

JOHN
(frightened, but fighting
back; more tentatively now)
Anything...

BETTY
(she is furious now)
Nothin'! You're doin' nothin', John.
At least I'm doin' somethin'.

BEN'S VOICE
(outside door)
Your introduction, Betty. Right away.
Hurry up.

Getting a large, long, bright boa and wrapping it around
herself:

BETTY
Right... Comin'.

JOHN
But you know that I love you. I
want to marry you. I need...

She pauses a second. They look at each other.

(CONTINUED)

110 CONTINUED: (4)

BETTY

Don't make me dead, John. I gotta
be alive.

They don't touch. She smiles at him and hurriedly exits. We can SEE the stage, but not the audience from the dressing room door. We WATCH Betty cross backstage, talking to people, kissing them, waving, revving up. Then we SEE her wait a second and spring to life as she is announced, throwing up her arms and screaming backstage so she comes on charged. She enters the stage, the cameras move in on her, and there is an absolute ROAR from the audience. Other panelists and Host applaud and Betty, laughing, bows and bows, and finally grabs a microphone and goes down in the audience out of our, and John's, sight, and the SCREAMING from the audience is flabbergasting. As John walks along backstage, exiting the stage door, we HEAR Betty doing 'her thing' with the audience to enormous response.

THE END